



# Essays on Social Contexts and Individual Politics: The Political Influence of Religious Institutions and Ethno-Racial Neighborhood Contexts

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Essays on Social Contexts and Individual Politics:  
the Political Influence of Religious Institutions and Ethno-Racial  
Neighborhood Contexts

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Committee on Higher Degrees in Social Policy

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**Abstract**

Citizens regularly encounter social contexts that have important consequences for political behavior. This dissertation evaluates the political influence of two such environments: religious institutions and ethno-racial neighborhood contexts.

The first two essays consider the role of political cue-giving as a mechanism of influence in religious institutions. Essay one examines the content of political messages disseminated at church using an original collection of more than 21,000 sermons from over 2,100 U.S. Christian clergy. It evaluates the extent to which clergy messages include explicitly political commentary, such as overt critiques or praises of political institutions, policies and officials and direct calls to political action. It demonstrates that most sermons do not contain explicitly political cues, and that the explicitness of sermons varies by theological ideology and levels of political engagement.

Essay two uses an experiment to evaluate the impact of political cues in religious messages on political behavior. It demonstrates that while political content in Christian religious messages does influence Christians' political behavior, implicitly political cues are more effective than explicitly political appeals at priming Christians' religious orientations and impacting Christians' political attitudes, moral issue evaluations, political engagement and political participation. The implication of essays one and two is clear: the greater frequency and efficacy of cues received at church that avoid direct references to politics helps explain the politicization of Christianity in contemporary American politics.

Essay three focuses on the influence of neighborhood interactions with businesses owned by ethno-racial out-groups. It argues that local exchanges with businesses owned by out-

groups are fundamental in shaping out-group attitudes; they facilitate inter-group contact and provide salient indicators of the ethno-racial distribution of local economic power. Using a novel data set that relies on U.S. Census data on minority business ownership, this essay demonstrates that blacks, Latinos and whites respond differently to out-group economic empowerment. While blacks and Latinos become less hostile towards each other as Hispanic and black business ownership increases, respectively, whites become more antagonistic towards out-groups as out-group business ownership increases. These findings have important implications for the political challenges and opportunities posed by an increasingly diverse society.

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To my family.

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# 1 Introduction: Social Contexts and Individual Political Behavior

Citizens regularly encounter social environments that have important political consequences. The voluntary associations, friendship networks and neighborhoods to which individuals are tied all have the capacity to shape individual politics (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2004; Mutz, 2006). These contexts not only disseminate politically relevant information but also facilitate inter-personal interactions that can inform individuals' political beliefs and behaviors.

Social environments take on particular political relevance given their accessibility as a part of everyday life. As scholars of American politics well know, many Americans are uninformed about and inattentive to politics (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, 1954; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996*a*). Lacking the interest necessary to remedy their knowledge deficits, individuals rely on their immediate social experiences to help them make sense of the political world. The role that social circumstances play in determining what people believe and do about politics is, thus, fundamental to our understanding of the content and extent of citizens' involvement in American democracy.

Despite the relevance of social environments to individual political behavior, important questions remain regarding their influence. Although scholars suggest that the communication of politically relevant information underlies social influence (e.g., Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995), most assessments of political messaging in social contexts rely on survey and ethnographic research, both of which have methodological limitations. It remains unclear whether

patterns of communication exist to support prevailing theories of contextual effects. Are individuals exposed to political cues in their social contexts? What types of political cues are individuals exposed to? And, what are the effects of the cues that individuals *actually* receive?

Moreover, while studies of contextual effects indicate that inter-personal interactions facilitate social influence, the consequences of interactions in more heterogeneous contexts are unclear (e.g., Huckfeldt, Johnson and Sprague, 2004; Mutz, 2006). While some studies indicate that interactions with individuals who are different from oneself – i.e., in their views or background – have positive effects on outcomes such as efficacy, participation, and tolerance, others suggest that exposure to difference has more negative impacts, diminishing engagement and enhancing prejudice. Thus, what effect do interactions with out-groups – whether defined by opinions, race, ethnicity or some other characteristic – have on individuals? Do they enhance or depress tolerance and understanding?

This dissertation evaluates the above questions in the context of two seemingly non-political everyday social environments – religious institutions and neighborhoods. Chapters two and three evaluate the role of political communication as a source of influence in religious institutions, examining two questions: What is the nature and frequency of political communication in churches? What is the influence of political cues received at church on political behavior? The fourth chapter evaluates the influence of neighborhood interactions with individuals of a different race or ethnicity. In particular, it asks: How do local interactions with businesses owned by racial and ethnic minority out-groups influence attitudes towards individuals of a different race or ethnicity?

This introduction explains why a focus on each social environment – i.e., churches or neighborhoods – is pertinent in assessing the questions regarding the role of political communication and out-group interactions, respectively, in shaping individual politics. It concludes with a consideration of the broader relevance of this dissertation to future research on social contexts and political behavior.

## 1.1 Churches, Political Cue-Giving and Individual Politics

The questions regarding the role of political communication in social environments are of particular importance to the study of religion and politics. Countless studies indicate that religious institutions play a prominent role in the formation of individuals' political beliefs and behaviors (e.g., Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988; Welch et al., 1993; Djupe and Gilbert, 2009). Moreover, scholars suggest that political cues disseminated at church help explain patterns of religious influence (e.g., Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988; Greenberg, 2000; Cavendish, 2001).

However, existing research offers mixed conclusions regarding the nature of political cues disseminated at church. Some assessments indicate that parishioners are regularly exposed to communications about voting, candidates, and policy during church services (e.g., Smidt, 2004a). Others indicate a dearth of such overtly political commentary, suggesting that messages relayed at church primarily involve broader discussion of social and moral topics only indirectly tied to politics (e.g., Greenberg, 2000). These disparate conclusions are difficult to assess given methodological limitations of existing research. Studies to date have relied solely on indirect observation of cue-giving using surveys and small sample evaluations of messages using ethnographic approaches.

Knowing how political content gets incorporated into religious messages – i.e., how explicit references to politically relevant topics are – is not simply relevant to our understanding of the messages churchgoers receive; it is central to our expectations regarding the role of political cue-giving as a mechanism of religious influence. Although studies have not evaluated how the explicitness of political cues conditions religious influence, there are reasons to suspect that congregants may respond differently to cues that are coded rather than obvious. Scholarship on political communication (e.g., Mendelberg, 2001) suggests that implicit rather than explicit cues may be more likely to increase reliance on religious orientations when congregants' make political decisions. In fact, the failure to differentiate congregants'

receptivity to implicitly versus explicitly political cues may help explain the inconclusive results in existing studies of the impact of religious political messages on political behavior (e.g., Welch et al., 1993; Djupe and Gilbert, 2009).

Thus, chapters two and three reevaluate the content and influence of religious political communication in order to clarify the role of political cue-giving as a mechanism of religious influence. Focusing on political communication in U.S. Christian churches, chapter two evaluates how explicitly political clergy statements are from the pulpit. Chapter three examines how the explicitness of political cues in religious messages conditions religious influence.

Each chapter relies on original data and different methods. Chapter two uses on an original collection of more than 21,000 sermons from over 2,100 U.S. Christian clergy in order to systematically assess the content of clergy messages. A supervised approach to quantitative text analysis is used in order to automate and expedite the process of content analysis across the thousands of sermons. Chapter three employs original data from an experiment. The experiment was conducted between September 26, 2012 and November 16, 2012 and more than 1000 subjects participated in the study. The experimental manipulation randomly exposed individuals to an excerpt from a Christian sermon that contained either no, implicit or explicit references to politics. The experimental design allowed for the identification of the causal effect of implicitly and explicitly political cues in religious messages on individual political behavior.

The analysis in chapter two shows that most sermons are not explicitly political: sermons rarely include overt critiques or praises of political institutions, policies, officials, and organizations, and direct calls to political action. Instead, sermons more often contain references to socio-moral issues only indirectly tied to politics. Chapter two also shows that sermons are more likely to include direct references to politics in theologically liberal than conservative churches.

The results in chapter three display the relevance of these finding for individual politics. Implicitly political cues in religious messages are more effective than explicitly political

appeals at influencing the political behavior of Christians. Cues that make only indirect references to politics are more likely than overt messages to heighten the salience of Christian religious orientations in determining Christians' political preferences, moral issue attitudes, psychological engagement with politics and political participation.

Taken together, chapters two and three demonstrate the greater frequency and efficacy of religious political cues, specifically in sermons, that avoid direct references to politics. This result has a clear implication: implicitly rather than explicitly political communication is a key mechanism of influence in Christian religious institutions.

Moreover, given the uneven distribution of explicitly political cues across churches, chapters two and three also help explain patterns of Christian political mobilization in contemporary American politics. For the past three decades, while Christian conservatives have constituted a highly visible political movement under the banner of the Christian Right, a comparably politicized religious Left has failed to emerge among more theologically liberal Christians (Olson, 2007; Wilcox and Fortelny, 2009). The findings in chapters two and three highlight the potential role of political communication in shaping these theological differences. The greater politicization of Christian theological conservatives may, in part, be due to the political cues they receive at church: political cues are less explicit and therefore more effective at enhancing the political salience of religious considerations in theologically conservative than liberal churches.

## **1.2 Neighborhoods, Inter- Racial and Ethnic Group Interactions, and Out-Group Attitudes**

The consequences of interactions that expose individuals to “difference” are particularly relevant in the context of inter- racial and ethnic group neighborhood exchanges. As the U.S. becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, inter- racial and ethnic group encounters are becoming increasingly common (Logan and Stults, 2011; Glaeser and Vigdor, 2012). How

individuals respond to these inter-group experiences – whether positively, with greater out-group understanding, or negatively, with more out-group animosity – is critically important to the political consequences of an increasingly diverse society.

The impact of inter-racial and ethnic group contact on out-group attitudes has been a central concern in the study of racial and ethnic politics. Many studies have examined how the racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods – in particular, their residential composition – influences attitudes towards individuals of a different race or ethnicity (e.g., Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Gay, 2006). Scholars debate whether residentially integrated neighborhoods enhance inter-group comity or augment out-group hostility given the competing expectations of *contact theory* (e.g., Allport, 1954) and *threat theory* (e.g., Blumer, 1958). Focused primarily on the consequences of residential contact between groups, existing studies have largely neglected to evaluate how alternative domains of inter-group contact within neighborhoods may have distinct impacts on out-group attitudes.

Thus, the fourth chapter of this dissertation engages the debate over the effects of inter-group contact by exploring how local exchanges with businesses owned by out-groups influence out-group attitudes. It offers a theory of how economic experiences with out-groups contribute to ethno-racial attitudes in ways that are unique from residential interactions. It argues that economic transactions with businesses owned by out-group members both facilitate contact with out-groups and provide particularly salient indicators of the ethno-racial distribution of local economic power. Contact with economically empowered out-groups may diminish or augment hostility towards out-group members. Exchanges with economically empowered out-groups may promote inter-group understanding by fostering perceptions of out-group members as economic contributors to local communities. Or, proximity to economically empowered out-groups may engender out-group animosity by spurring competition for local economic control.

In order to examine the influence of economic exchanges with out-groups, chapter four uses a novel data set that takes advantage of county-level data on the racial and ethnic



composition of business ownership from the 2007 Survey of Businesses Owners (SBO), a survey conducted by the U.S. Census. The SBO data are linked to individual-level data from the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey and county-level contextual data from the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census.

The analysis in chapter four clearly demonstrates the importance of economic interactions with racial and ethnic out-groups in shaping out-group attitudes. Depending on the groups under consideration, economic transactions can produce inter-group comity or conflict. African Americans and Latinos become more supportive of each other's policy interests as the share of businesses owned by Hispanics and blacks increases, respectively. In contrast, whites become more anti-immigrant as Asians own a larger share of local businesses and more anti-black as African American, Hispanic and Asian business ownership increases.

Chapter four also shows that the effects of inter-group contact differ depending on the domain of interaction. The impacts of economic and residential exchanges on out-group attitudes are similar in magnitude but in opposite directions. While blacks and Latinos respond favorably to out-groups as out-groups own a larger share of area businesses, they respond negatively as out-groups comprise a larger share of the residential population. In contrast, whites respond negatively as out-group business ownership rises and positively as out-group population share increases. That out-group economic and residential contact have opposing effects is particularly notable given how highly correlated black, Hispanic and Asian business ownership are with black, Hispanic and Asian population share, respectively.

To explain the distinct responses of racial and ethnic groups to out-group business ownership and residential proximity, the discussion in chapter four suggests that each group's socioeconomic position shapes reactions to inter-group contact across domains. Given their lower socioeconomic position on average, blacks and Latinos are more likely than whites to live in disadvantaged communities that lack basic economic resources (e.g., jobs and services). Consequently, blacks and Latinos respond positively to out-group business ownership because the contributions out-group business owners make to the basic resources available in

communities are highly salient; but, they respond negatively to out-group residential proximity because out-group residents compete for (rather than supply) these basic resources. In contrast, for whites, given their higher socioeconomic position on average, basic economic considerations are less salient and higher order concerns regarding their longstanding social and economic dominance are more relevant. Thus, they respond negatively to out-group business ownership because it constitutes a threat to their dominance; yet they respond positively to out-group residential proximity because, again, competition for basic economic goods is less important. Of course, the results in chapter four are only suggestive of these patterns. However, they do indicate the potential role that a group's socioeconomic position may play in dictating responses to inter-group exchanges across domains of neighborhood interaction.

The findings in chapter four have significant consequences for the prospects for inter-racial and ethnic coalitions. The strong positive correlation between out-group business ownership and residential proximity as well as the opposing effects of each on out-group attitudes suggest that inter-group interactions within neighborhoods both facilitate *and* undermine the conditions necessary for inter-group cooperation. Consequently, inter-group coalitions are most likely to emerge in communities that offset pressures towards out-group hostility with those that augment comity. This highlights the significant political challenges but also opportunities presented by an increasingly diverse society.

### 1.3 Future Research

This dissertation has important implications for future research on social contexts and political behavior. First, studies that investigate the political cues to which individuals are exposed in their social contexts *and* the influence of these messages are necessary. As shown in chapters two and three, such evaluations provide critical insights into not only differences in how political content gets incorporated into socially transmitted information but

also how these differences relate to variations in individual political behavior. Of course, central to such an endeavor is the apriori identification of distinctions in political cue-giving that have consequences for individual politics. Prior empirical research and existing theoretical frameworks can provide extremely useful towards this end. As chapters two and three demonstrate, previous studies can offer empirical insights regarding differences in the content of political cues that based upon analytical frameworks from scholarship on political communication may explain when and how political cue-giving serves as a mechanism of influence. Such a research agenda undoubtedly requires the ability to investigate the content of political messages in social environments using direct and large scale approaches. With the expansion of the internet, opportunities for this type of scholarship are abundant. From online archives that provide access to communications in non-digital social contexts, such as that used in chapter two, to online social communities that offer real-time entree into social discourse, there are many ways for scholars to obtain data that allow for systematic studies of contextually based information flows.

Second, research on when and why different modes of interaction with out-groups have different political consequences are necessary. As shown in chapter four, interactions with out-groups can enhance or diminish inter-group harmony depending on the sphere of interaction. The explanation for the differential effects observed emphasizes how socioeconomic status shapes the meaning of interaction across social spaces. Notably, scholarship on the benefits of deliberative democracy and inter-group contact also highlight the importance of equal status in determining the outcomes of inter- personal or group interaction (e.g., Gutmann and Thompson, 2009; Allport, 1954). While chapter four confirms the importance of status concerns, it also demonstrates that inequalities in status do not always undermine the positive effects of inter-group contact. There may be domains where interacting with an out-group that has more power has beneficial consequences (e.g., black interactions with Hispanic owned businesses) and exchanges with an out-group that is of equal status has negative consequences (e.g., black interactions with Hispanic residents). Depending on the

sphere of interaction, status differentials may augment the salience of positive or negative signals that emerge from inter-group interaction (e.g., whether out-groups are supplying or competing for resources). More research is necessary to understand the conditions under which interactions in more heterogeneous contexts produce positive outcomes, e.g., understanding, or negative outcomes, e.g., hostility. As indicated by chapter four, a useful starting point may be to examine variation in the effects of distinct modes of inter-group interaction in order to develop testable hypotheses regarding why such variation emerges.

Beyond its contributions to scholarship on contextual effects and its relevance for future research in this area, this dissertation demonstrates the powerful role that individuals' social environments play in shaping their politics and, in particular, the political significance of social group identities. American politics is fraught with social cleavages. In the 2012 national election, while more than sixty percent of Protestants voted for Mitt Romney, less than thirty percent of religiously unaffiliated voters supported the Republican candidate. Moreover, while more than ninety percent of African Americans voted for Barack Obama, less than forty percent of whites voted for the incumbent President. Thus, important in the study of American politics is the question of how social groups come to be relevant to individual political behavior. As the chapters that follow show, the experiences individuals have in the course of their everyday lives – from the messages they hear at church, to the encounters they have in their neighborhoods – are critical in politicizing social group differences.

## 2 Sermons Aren't Explicitly Political: Political Cue-Giving in Sermons by U.S. Christian Clergy

Political communication by clergy is fundamental to our understanding of relationships between religion and politics. Clergy political speech is often identified as a key mechanism underlying associations between religious variables and public opinion and political participation (Beatty and Walter, 1988; Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988; Beatty and Walter, 1989; Wilcox, 1990; Wald, Owen and Hill, 1990; Jelen, 1992*b*; Welch et al., 1993; Guth et al., 1997; Greenberg, 2000; Olson, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Fetzer, 2001; Jelen, 2001; Campbell and Monson, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003; Bjarnason and Welch, 2004; Smidt, 2004*b,c*; Smith, 2005; Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006; Mulligan, 2006). Given its relevance, political speech by clergy has received significant scholarly attention (Hadden, 1969; Stark et al., 1971; Quinley, 1974; Koller and Retzer, 1980; Beatty and Walter, 1988, 1989; Guth et al., 1997; Greenberg, 2000; Olson, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Brewer, Kersh and Petersen, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003; Smidt, 2004*a*).

All studies of clergy political communication conducted in the U.S. to date have relied on ethnographic research and surveys. Given the difficulty of gathering and analyzing statements made by clergy in the thousands of churches across the country, it is understandable why scholars have turned to these methods. Unfortunately, dependence on conventional methods of analysis has prohibited the systematic evaluation of important questions. In

particular, small sample studies have provided insights into how clergy incorporate political information into their statements that have been difficult to validate using surveys.

In this paper, I apply quantitative methods for text analysis to an original collection of more than 21,000 sermons from over 2,100 Christian clergy in the U.S. in order to systematically test theories of clergy political speech in ways that were previously not possible. Extending insights from ethnographic studies, I evaluate the extent to which clergy messages include overtly political commentary, such as explicit critiques (or praises) of political institutions, policies, officials, and organizations, and direct calls to political action. I then assess the conditions under which clergy are more or less likely to engage in explicit political messaging. This analysis demonstrates that most sermons do not contain explicitly political cues. Moreover, it shows that the explicitness of messages varies according to variables capturing differences in theological ideology and political engagement. These findings have important implications for understandings of clergy influence, explanations for clergy political speech and involvement, and political inequality.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In the first section, I describe findings from ethnographic and survey research regarding how clergy discuss politics; provide a definition of explicitly political speech; and discuss expectations regarding the frequency of explicit messaging. The second and third sections describe the sermon data and methods used to analyze the data. The fourth section presents the results of this analysis. The final section concludes.

## **2.1 The Nature of Clergy Political Communication**

### **2.1.1 Previous Research**

Ethnographic research suggests that clergy messages primarily include broader discussions of social and moral topics rather than overtly political statements. A recent study finds that messages relayed during worship services “typically address matters of social justice,”

such as helping the needy and the importance of tolerance, and rarely address “political activity or belief, such as specific public policies or civic involvement (including voting)” (Brewer, Kersh and Petersen, 2003, 125). Another work reports that, while most leaders do encourage their congregations to perform their civic duty by reminding them to vote, “Political communication often stops here, however, as partisan and ideological politics are deemed inappropriate” (Greenberg, 2000, 383). Furthermore, Greenberg states, “churches rarely sponsor political activity or direct action against the state” (386). More common are encouragements to participate in community outreach.

The dearth of explicitly political statements found in ethnographic studies is surprising given survey research on clergy political messaging. Surveys indicate that clergy do engage in explicit forms of speech (see, e.g., Guth et al., 1997; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003; Smidt, 2004a).<sup>1</sup> Many clergy report regularly taking stands on political issues, urging congregants to vote, publicly discussing candidates, and addressing a range of sociopolitical concerns, including overtly political topics, such as scandals in government and capital punishment. The only form of political speech that is rare is candidate endorsements from the pulpit. This is not surprising given that most churches are tax exempt institutions and tax law prohibits clergy from these institutions from making such statements. These results are confirmed by estimates from the 2001 Cooperative Clergy Study Project (CCSP), one of the most extensive surveys of clergy from more than 20 different denominations in the U.S (Tables 2.1 and 2.2).

The disparate conclusions regarding the scope of explicit political speech in ethnographic and survey research are difficult to assess given methodological limitations of previous works. Findings from ethnographic studies are impossible to generalize, as they are based on evaluations of pastors and churches from select geographic areas and only a few denominations. Despite their potential to offer a more representative understanding, surveys are also inadequate. Nuanced differences in how clergy incorporate politics into their statements are hard

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<sup>1</sup>No survey study has directly evaluated the extent of overtly political messages.

Table 2.1: Clergy Engaging in Political Speech (%)

	In 2000	Sometimes or Often
Touched on a political issue in sermon	44	73
Took a stand on a political issue from the pulpit	29	64
Urged congregants to register and vote	51	39
Prayed publicly for political candidates	31	40
Endorsed a candidate while preaching	3	11

Table 2.2: Clergy Addressing Issue Often or Very Often (%)

Hunger and Poverty	72	Religious Persecution	44
Alcohol and Drug Abuse	68	Environmental Problems	38
Race Relations and Civil Rights	65	School Prayer	34
Abortion	61	Education and School Choice	33
Family Decline	56	Scandals in Government	32
Pornography and Obscenity	53	Capital Punishment	31
Gender Equity	52	Gambling	31
Gay Rights and Homosexuality	52	Gun Laws	22
Domestic Violence	51	National Defense	18

to measure using survey questions. In particular, two factors disable the disaggregation of explicitly political messaging and broader discussions of social and moral topics in survey responses: subjective preacher reasoning regarding what constitutes political speech and inaccurate clergy recall of political messaging.

Studies suggest that conceptions of political speech are inconsistent among clergy. While some pastors make clear distinctions between overtly political commentary (e.g., government spending and abortion policy) and discussions of social and moral issues (e.g., poverty and family problems), others adopt a more encompassing view (see Beatty and Walter, 1989; Guth et al., 1997; Olson, 2000; Greenberg, 2000). This is evident in the explanations clergy provide for discussing social, moral and political issues (Guth et al., 1997, 87) and variation in clergy responses to survey items measuring speech on “social and political issues,” “political issues,” “moral issues,” and specific topics (Beatty and Walter, 1989; Guth et al., 1997). As a result, interpersonally incomparable definitions of politics confound measurement of overtly political cue-giving using surveys.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>One approach to address problems posed by interpersonal incomparability is anchoring vignettes (King et al., 2004).



Problems with clergy recall also obscure measurement of explicitly political speech. Clergy self-reports of their cue-giving behavior may be influenced by norms regarding their proper roles. If pastors believe they should address certain topics, they may provide the socially desirable response and over-report engaging in such discussions. Given that many clergy approve of explicitly political speech (see, e.g., Guth et al., 1997; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003; Smidt, 2004a),<sup>3</sup> survey responses likely overstate the frequency of overtly political messaging. Survey context effects may also cause clergy recall to be incorrect. By priming considerations of the role of clergy in politics, surveys can raise the salience of overtly political messages, making them more accessible in memory. Most survey data, including the CCSP, is collected as part of larger examinations of clergy political behavior (see, e.g., Guth et al., 1997; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003; Smidt, 2004a). As a result, priming likely introduces bias into survey measures of explicit speech.

### 2.1.2 Distinguishing Explicit Messages

Reliance on ethnographic and survey research has constrained our understanding of the nature of clergy political communication. On the basis of existing studies, it is unclear whether and to what extent clergy engage in explicitly political messaging. When addressing their congregations, do clergy incorporate overtly political content? Or, do pastors primarily discuss implicitly political issues, that is, social and moral issues that are only indirectly tied to politics?

Extending insights from ethnographic studies, I distinguish explicitly political messages from implicitly political statements. *Explicitly* political messages are clergy communications that include direct critiques (or praises) of political objects, such as political institutions, officials, policies, and organizations, and overt calls to political action. For example, a sermon describing the political implications of religious values for government regulation of

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<sup>3</sup>Estimates from the CCSP confirm that more than half of clergy support taking stands from the pulpit on political issues. See CCSP variable pulstand.

contraceptives is explicit while one describing the private implications of religious teachings for personal contraceptive use is not. When pastors discuss socio-moral issues but fail to include overtly political statements, their messages do not lack political relevance, however. Indeed, clergy statements referencing these issues contain content that is more proximately related to politics than messages about religious topics, such as faith in god, individual salvation and evangelism. When clergy address socio-moral issues but do not clearly articulate their political implications, clergy cues are *implicitly* political.

There are important reasons to suspect that clergy avoid explicit discussions of politics. Most significantly, the primary roles of clergy are religious and not political (Olson, 2009)(see also Crawford, 1995). In the fulfillment of their pastoral duties, clergy are to provide guidance on spiritual matters and religious teachings before commenting on political affairs. While theological beliefs may encourage some clergy to adopt more favorable dispositions towards political involvement, political pursuits remain secondary to religious priorities. Moreover, church leaders face institutional constraints. As organizations dependent on voluntary participation, churches seek to attract new members and retain current parishioners. Given that many Americans lack strong interests in politics<sup>4</sup> and believe churches should keep out of political affairs,<sup>5</sup> institutional objectives may prevent pastors from making overtly political statements.

## 2.2 The Sermon Data

To evaluate the extent of explicitly political messaging by clergy, I analyze an original collection of over 21,000 sermons from more than 2,100 U.S. Christian clergy. The sermon data is from SermonCentral.com. SermonCentral.com is an online information sharing network for Christian church leaders and members. This online database contains the text of over 150,000 user-supplied sermons as well as information about sermon contributors and their

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<sup>4</sup>See American National Election Study 1948-2004 Cumulative Data File VCF0310 and VCF0313.

<sup>5</sup>See Pew Research Center for the People & the Press March 2012 Political Survey Final Topline Q58.

congregations.

Only a subset of the sermons in the SermonCentral.com database is used in this analysis. The subset contains sermons in English from clergy located in the fifty U.S. states that were added to the database in national election years from 2000 to 2010.<sup>6</sup> The subset also contains all sermons from black, Hispanic and Asian congregations in the database that met the geographical and year restrictions. The remainder of the subset is comprised of a random sample of sermons from white and multi-ethnic churches. For each sermon, information about the contributor's congregation is also included. This sermon meta-data includes user supplied information on church denomination, racial and ethnic composition, and geographical location (i.e., city, state and zip code). In total, the sermon data contains information on 21,637 sermons from 2,136 clergy.

Table 2.3 contains summary statistics of the sermon meta-data, providing a brief profile of the sermons and clergy in this analysis. Estimates from the 2006-2007 National Congregations Study (NCS), a recent nationally representative survey of churches in the U.S., are also included for comparison. There are certainly differences in the distribution of churches in the sermon data and the NCS. While the differences indicate that the sermon data does not constitute a nationally representative sample of U.S. churches, there are important advantages to evaluating clergy messages using these data. Compared to data from ethnographic studies, the sermon data contains a larger and more diverse denominational and geographic sample. While both data from surveys and the sermon data constitute convenience samples,<sup>7</sup> unlike surveys, the sermon data is not reliant on clergy definitions and recall of political speech. Finally, the sermon data provides rich information on the content of clergy messages, allowing for a close examination of the explicitness of political cues.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The subset was created in October 2010. Consequently, the subset does not include sermons that were added to the SermonCentral.com database in November or December 2010.

<sup>7</sup>All survey studies of clergy political speech have utilized convenience or other non-nationally representative samples of clergy.

<sup>8</sup>One potential limitation of the data is that sermons posted online may not accurately represent sermons preached from the pulpit. In particular, if clergy misrepresent the nature of political content in their sermons

Table 2.3: Characteristics of the Sermons and Clergy in the Sermon Data

	Sermon Data		2006-2007 NCS
	% Sermons (N=21637)	% Clergy (N=2136)	% Churches (N=1506)
Denomination			
Baptist	35.7	31.9	21.8
Catholic	0.4	0.4	24.2
Episcopal	0.3	0.6	2.9
Lutheran	3.4	3.1	6.0
Methodist	5.5	6.8	9.6
Pentecostal	20.8	22.5	5.9
Presbyterian/Reformed	3.8	3.3	5.0
Other Christian	30.1	31.5	21.0
Non-Christian	—	—	3.5
Racial and Ethnic Composition			
Asian	1.3	1.4	1.5
Black	2.9	6.1	12.2
Hispanic	0.5	1.4	2.8
White	47.0	42.3	59.2
Multi-Ethnic	48.3	48.8	23.2
NA	—	—	1.1
Geographical Region			
Northeast	8.5	9.1	14.9
Midwest	25.2	25.2	26.0
South	48.7	51.2	39.6
West	17.5	14.4	19.5

## 2.3 Measuring Explicit Speech

To measure explicitly political speech in the sermon data, I use a supervised approach to quantitative text analysis. This class of methods allows researchers to automate and expedite the process of content analysis across thousands of documents. Given the number of sermons to be analyzed, this approach is particularly useful.

The specific model implemented is a Bayesian scaling algorithm (Beauchamp, N.d.).<sup>9</sup> For

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online, the validity of inferences made using the sermon data is questionable. However, there is little reason to suspect that clergy engage in this type of behavior. Most importantly, the primary consumers of SermonCentral.com are other clergy. As discussed earlier, norms among clergy are supportive of political speech and are unlikely to discourage clergy from posting explicitly political content.

<sup>9</sup>Although other scaling models exist, this algorithm improves upon commonly used alternatives (Beauchamp, N.d.).

a collection of documents, the algorithm assumes that there are two general categories of texts, each representing one end of a latent continuum. Based on a hand-coded subset of documents, the “training” set, the model identifies differences in word usage patterns across document categories. The algorithm then scores each document according to a ratio of how similar the document’s words are to the words in each set of hand-coded documents.<sup>10</sup>

I use a scaling model instead of a classification model, another approach to quantitatively analyzing text (see Grimmer and Stewart, N.d.), for two reasons. First, although explicit speech is conceptually distinct from implicit and non-political speech, underlying these forms of communication is a latent scale measuring how directly related their content is to politics. Scaling models are able to retrieve this continuum, providing scores that range from explicitly political to implicitly and non-political speech.<sup>11</sup> A second desirable property of scaling algorithms is that word frequencies affect the scoring. Sermons with more (fewer) words that are predictive of explicitly political speech will receive more (less) extreme scores on the scale. Thus, the relative position of scores will not only distinguish sermons with explicit, implicit and non-political content but also differentiate sermons that are focused on versus

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<sup>10</sup>More formally, given two classes of documents with associated reference texts A and B, the algorithm calculates a score for document D using a logged ratio of the likelihood of D belonging to A versus B. Thus, we must determine  $pr(A|D)$  and  $pr(B|D)$ . Using Bayes’ Rule, we know: (1)  $p(A|D) = \frac{p(D|A)p(A)}{p(D)}$ . Denoting the  $i$ -th word in D as  $w_i$  and assuming the independence of words, we can say that: (2)  $p(D|A) = \prod_{i \in D} p(w_i|A)$ . Here, “ $i$ ” indexes each occurrence of a word. Repetitions of the same word are uniquely identified with a new number. Substituting (2) into (1), we get: (3)  $p(A|D) = \frac{p(A)}{p(D)} \prod_{i \in D} p(w_i|A)$ . Assuming that A and B are mutually exclusive categories, we obtain: (4)  $p(B|D) = \frac{p(B)}{p(D)} \prod_{i \in D} p(w_i|B)$ . Finally, combining (3) and (4) and simplifying into a logged likelihood ratio, we calculate scores using: (5)  $score = \sum_{i \in D} \log \frac{p(w_i|A)}{p(w_i|B)}$ .

This model relies on two important assumptions that I violate below. First, it assumes that the proportion of documents in each class is the same in the hand-coded set as it is in the population of documents. This assumption is common in supervised classification models, although recently developed methods relax this requirement (Hopkins and King, 2010). Given how I produce my training set, details on which are provided below, I likely violate this assumption. Overall, this affects the interpretation of absolute scores but does not impact the meaning of relative differences between scores, which are of interest in this analysis. Second, the model assumes the independence of words within each document. Clearly, words are correlated with each other, but, like others (Beauchamp, N.d.), I find the algorithm works well in practice.

<sup>11</sup>Essentially, by identifying words that are highly predictive of explicit and non-explicit speech as well as words that are less predictive but positively correlated with each type of speech, scaling models distinguish linguistic patterns that are more and less schematically related to overtly political topics.

Table 2.4: Example Sermons

Explicitly Political	“So, how would he vote? Jesus would vote for a candidate who supported and preserved life personally and politically. I don’t believe that he would support a candidate who would support life personally, but politically voted pro-choice” (Fritz, 2008).
Implicitly Political	“Are you interpreting the hardships of life as His way of getting even with you for disobeying Him, for getting the abortion no one else knows about, for being unfaithful to your wife, for living recklessly, for making some bad decisions, for neglecting your children?” (Anderson, N.d.).
Non-Political	“We have many probing through the pages of restoration history seeking answers. Others are searching through reformation history to find the key to restoration. Why not go back to the Bible and let the Bible speak for itself or should we say let God speak for himself as to what it is he is working to restore” (Davis, N.d.).

only briefly mention explicitly political topics.<sup>12</sup>

To implement the Bayesian scaling model, I first manually hand-coded a subset of sermons as explicitly political and not explicitly political.<sup>13</sup> Adopting the definition above, sermons were coded as explicit if they included commentary directly referencing political objects and as not-explicit otherwise.<sup>14</sup> Examples of excerpts from one explicit and two non-explicit sermons are provided in Table 2.4.<sup>15</sup> The explicit excerpt directly addresses how religious beliefs relate to political issues such as voting, candidate evaluations and abortion policy. In contrast, both non-explicit examples, that is, the implicitly political and non-political excerpts, do not overtly reference political objects, although the implicit example does include a discussion of socio-moral issues, such as abortion, infidelity, and parenting.

After hand-coding the subset, standard procedures for preprocessing the sermons were

<sup>12</sup>Because of a transformation performed on the numerical representation of the sermon texts, which is described below, the model calculates scores using logged and weighted word stem proportions rather than word frequencies. Word proportions better capture how much of a document is focused on one topic compared to another.

<sup>13</sup>I constructed the subset by taking a weighted random sample of all the sermons, weighting by the number of sermons contributed by each pastor. Weighted sampling was used to increase the number of clergy represented in the hand-coded set. This helps minimize the role of stylistic differences among clergy in their sermons when implementing the algorithm.

<sup>14</sup>Data on inter-coder reliability are not available. The data use agreement with SermonCentral.com required that only I have access to and personally hand-code the data.

<sup>15</sup>These excerpts are not from sermons in the sermon data described above and were not included in the hand-coded subset.

performed.<sup>16</sup> This converted each sermon into a numerical representation to be quantitatively analyzed. Next, the hand-coded subset and its numerical representation was used to train, assess and refine the Bayesian scaling algorithm.<sup>17</sup> This produced a final training set of 599 sermons, with 167 classified as having explicitly political content and 432 classified as not having such content. The training set was then used to generate document-level scores for all sermons.<sup>18</sup>

Table 2.5 provides a sense of the words (i.e., word stems) the scaling algorithm used to distinguish more from less explicitly political sermons. It contains the 50 words that are most predictive of overt and not-overt content.<sup>19</sup> The model correctly identifies words we would expect to be related to explicit speech, such as “vote,” “govern,” “citizen,” “america,”

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<sup>16</sup>First, all words were converted to lower case and all punctuation, numbers and stop words (e.g., that, which, before, how) were removed. Second, a stemming algorithm, in this case a Porter stemmer (Porter, 1980), was used to replace each word with its word stem. Third, the number of times each unique word stem (hereafter, “word”) in the corpus appeared in each sermon was counted and recorded. Fourth, frequent words and infrequent words were removed. Frequent words were those appearing in ninety-nine percent or more of the sermons and infrequent words were those appearing in one percent or less of the sermons. Finally, word frequencies were logged, weighted by their rarity in the collection of sermons using term-frequency inverse-document-frequency, and normalized for document length. After these steps, each sermon was represented as a  $w \times 1$  vector of transformed word counts, where  $w=4169$  is the number of unique words remaining in the corpus.

<sup>17</sup>First, I used the hand-coded subset (423 sermons total) to obtain scores for all sermons in the corpus. Second, to assess the algorithm’s performance, I evaluated whether the model produced scores that discriminated between documents coded as “explicit” versus “not-explicit.” I identified the range of overlap between the scores received by documents in each category and determined that about ten percent of the hand-coded sermons received scores in this range.

Third, to improve the model’s performance, I hand-coded additional documents. These documents were selected using two methods. 20 sermons were selected randomly. 24 sermons were selected by sampling from the tails of the score distribution. Specifically, sermons receiving scores greater than the ninth decile and less than the first decile were randomly sampled. Because the model was already performing fairly well, I used it to help identify sermons that were unambiguously explicit and not-explicit to increase the weight given to discriminating linguistic patterns. This form of selection on the dependent variable is problematic if content in the hand-coded subset is distinctive from content in the uncoded sermons. However, given the large number of sermons already hand-coded, this was unlikely, an assumption that was confirmed when reading and coding the 20 sermons selected using the first method.

I repeated the above steps four times, updating the hand-coded subset used to obtain scores at each iteration, until I was satisfied with the model’s performance. In the end, only 3% of the hand-coded “explicit” and “not-explicit” sermons received scores that overlapped.

<sup>18</sup>For ease of interpretation, I re-scaled scores to run between 0 and 1.

<sup>19</sup>These words were identified by calculating the difference in the probability of word use in the final two sets of hand-coded documents and taking the 50 words with the largest positive and largest negative difference in probabilities. Given the transformations to the word stem frequencies noted above, “word use” reflects the usage of words after frequencies have been logged, weighted and normalized.

“presid,” and “polit.”

Table 2.5: Top 50 Explicitly and Not Explicitly Political Words

Explicitly Political	Not Explicitly Political
vote, govern, citizen, america, presid, polit, countri, american, candid, tax, elect, iraq, citizenship, abort, civil, politician, constitut, caesar, congress, war, right, institut, muslim, senat, unit, moral, islam, freedom, parti, feder, flag, conserv, lincoln, allegi, independ, justic, million, cultur, terror, societi, support, black, economi, owe, link, liber, research, org, court, offic	thi, unto, thou, thee, hath, shalt, corinthian, salvat, rom, hast, david, john, cor, ephesian, grace, joy, paul, bless, sin, tongu, psalm, spirit, reviv, luke, peter, presenc, kjv, flesh, glori, devil, promis, righteous, roman, galatian, save, faith, thine, christma, holi, repent, satan, gift, nkjv, son, bodi, light, prepar, sinner, ruth, jame

## 2.4 Results

This section presents the results of this analysis. First, I examine the frequency of explicitly political speech in sermons and by clergy. Then, I evaluate two sources of variation in the explicitness of sermons: theological ideology and political engagement.

### 2.4.1 Explicit Messaging in Sermons and by Clergy

The distribution of sermon scores is plotted in Figure 2.1. Scores toward the right (left) indicate sermons that are more (less) explicitly political. The vertical lines at the bottom of the graph indicate the scores received by the sermons in the final hand-coded subset, with lines for (not) explicitly political sermons (below) above the x-axis. Less than 5% of all of the sermons received scores in the range of overlap for scores for sermons hand-coded as explicit and not-explicit. Also identified on the graph are the scores received by the sermons containing the excerpts provided in Table 2.4. These scores were obtained by running the trained model on these three sermons. They were not included when generating the score distribution. A vertical dotted line is added at the score received by the implicit example, providing a heuristic for distinguishing sermons with explicitly political content. The plot also indicates the percent of sermons with more overt content than the implicit example.



Three patterns are noteworthy in Figure 2.1. First, only about twenty percent of sermons are more explicitly political than the sermon containing the implicit example excerpt provided in Table 2.4. This suggests that the vast majority of sermons do not include direct references to politics when addressing socio-moral issues. Second, many sermons do contain implicitly political content. This is indicated by the large density of scores falling between the implicitly political and non-political examples. Finally, few sermons include explicitly political cues as a central focus. The lack of density around the explicitly political example, which incorporated overt messages as a main theme, supports this conclusion.

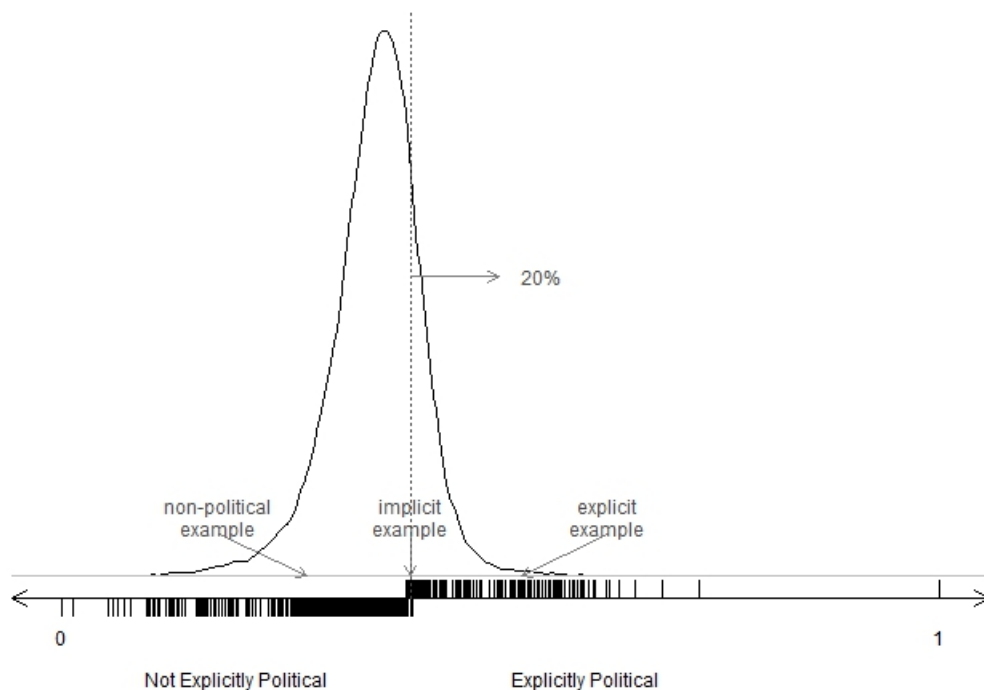


Figure 2.1: Distribution of Sermon Scores

To examine how many clergy deliver sermons with explicit cues, the maximum sermon score for each pastor is calculated. The distribution of these scores is shown in Figure 2.2, with scores toward the right (left) indicating sermons that are more (less) explicitly political. Again, the plot indicates the score received by the sermon containing the implicit excerpt in Table 2.4 as well as the percent of sermons with more overt content than the implicit

example. It demonstrates that although the majority of clergy do not engage in explicitly political speech (56%), a large proportion of pastors do deliver overtly political messages (44%).

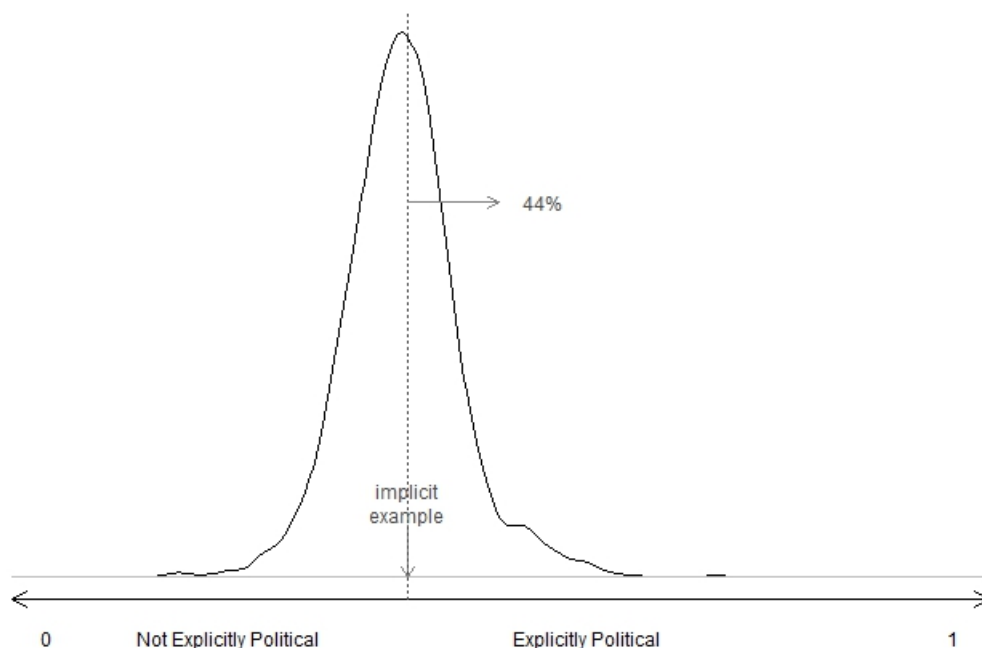


Figure 2.2: Distribution of Clergy Maximum Scores

Overall, these findings suggest that most sermons lack explicitly political cues. When sermons do contain overtly political commentary, this content is rarely their focus. However, many clergy do incorporate explicitly political messages into their sermons. Having described the overall nature of explicitly political communication, I now turn to examine the conditions under which sermons are more or less likely to be overtly political.

## 2.4.2 Variation by Theological Ideology

The relationship between clergy political speech and theological ideology is well documented (e.g., Hadden, 1969; Stark et al., 1971; Quinley, 1974; Koller and Retzer, 1980; Beatty and

Walter, 1989; Guth et al., 1997; Olson, 2000; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003). Early scholarship indicated that mainline clergy were more likely to engage in political cue-giving than evangelical pastors (Hadden, 1969; Stark et al., 1971; Quinley, 1974). However, more recent works report few theological differences in political speech once the issue agendas of pastors are considered (Guth et al., 1997; Beatty and Walter, 1989). Largely overlooked in existing research is the influence of theological beliefs on how clergy discuss politics from the pulpit. This failure is, in part, due to the difficulty of systematically examining the nature of political speech using previous methods. In this section, I examine how the explicitness of political cues varies across three measures capturing differences in theological ideology: mainline versus evangelical Protestant tradition, geographical region, and partisan context.

Differences in theological beliefs may lead mainline and evangelical clergy to adopt distinctive styles of political cue-giving. In particular, while religious doctrine, or views regarding the divine and man’s relationship to it, and social theology, or beliefs regarding the public role of religion (Guth et al., 1997), provide complementary views regarding how best to solve social problems among mainline clergy, these same beliefs offer competing views regarding solutions to moral problems among evangelical clergy. For mainline clergy, both their “this-worldly” focus and social gospel principles support church involvement in the public sphere to encourage governmental action in order to achieve social justice and reform. In contrast, for evangelical clergy, their “other-worldly” concerns discourage engagement in politics, emphasizing instead individual salvation through the cultivation of personal holiness; but, at the same time, their civic gospel principles advocate the legislation of Christian morality via governmental institutions. Based on studies of issue cross-pressures (see, e.g., Mutz, 2002; Therriault, Tucker and Brader, 2011), these coherent versus incoherent beliefs regarding solutions to socio-moral problems may cause mainline and evangelical clergy to engage in more and less explicitly political speech, respectively.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Consistent with these expectations, in independent assessments of the CCSP, while measures of evangelical tradition and doctrinal orthodoxy were negatively correlated with support for church involvement in the political process to address social problems, adherence to principles of the social and civic gospels was

Figure 2.3 shows the relationship between the explicitness of sermons and Protestant theological tradition using a box and whiskers plot. It compares the distribution of sermon scores across theological tradition categories. The “box” shows the inter-quartile range of each distribution. The line and point in the box indicate the median and mean scores respectively. The “whiskers” represent the lower extreme (left) and upper extreme (right) of each distribution. Sermon scores are on the x-axis. A dotted line is added at the score received by the implicit example sermon to distinguish more from less explicitly political sermons.

As expected, sermons from mainline clergy are more overtly political than those from evangelical pastors regardless of church ethno-racial composition. A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test of distributions confirms that sermon scores differ across theological groups ( $\chi^2(5)=823.21, p < 0.001$ ).<sup>21</sup>

These theological differences have important implications for the distribution of explicitly political sermons across geographic regions. Evangelical churches are more common in the South while mainline congregations are more common in the Northeast and Midwest (Haddaway and Marler, 2005). The concentration of different theological groups in distinct parts of the country clarifies regional variation in sermon scores reported in Figure 2.4. While average scores are lower in Southern states, they are higher in the Northeast and Midwest (Kruskal-Wallis  $\chi^2(3)=420.49, p < 0.001$ ).<sup>22</sup>

Given that evangelical Protestants are more likely to vote Republican than mainline Protestants (Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth, 2009), associations between theological tradition and sermon scores are also relevant to variation in the nature of political cues across partisan

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positively correlated with views regarding such involvement. Furthermore, support for political solutions was positively associated with taking stands from the pulpit on political issues.

<sup>21</sup>A multiple comparison test confirms that all pairwise differences are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) except those between sermons from mainline congregations.

<sup>22</sup>A multiple comparison test confirms that all pairwise differences between the Northeast, Midwest, South and West are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) except those between sermons from congregations in the Northeast and Midwest.

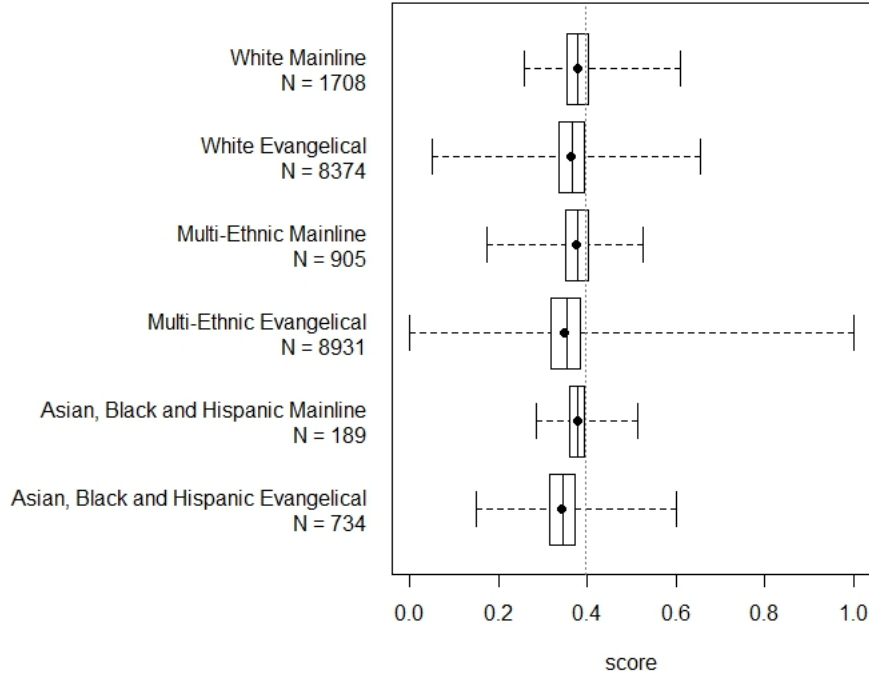


Figure 2.3: Sermon Score by Theological Tradition

contexts. A (non-parametric) Spearman rank correlation test of the relationship between the explicitness of sermons and the 2008 county-level two-party Democratic presidential vote share yields a  $\rho=0.08$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that sermon scores generally increase as counties become more supportive of Democratic candidates.<sup>23</sup>

### 2.4.3 Variation by Neighborhood Political Engagement

Apart from theological ideology, neighborhood contexts can also influence patterns of explicitly political speech by clergy. While few studies have examined the influence of neighborhood context on clergy political involvement, works that have are focused on how low socio-economic status neighborhoods enhance incentives for clergy to participate in politics

<sup>23</sup>Data on partisan context were obtained from the *CQ Voting and Elections Collection*. Similar patterns hold when Democratic vote share is calculated using 2000 and 2004 election data as well as when the year in which a sermon was contributed is taken into account.

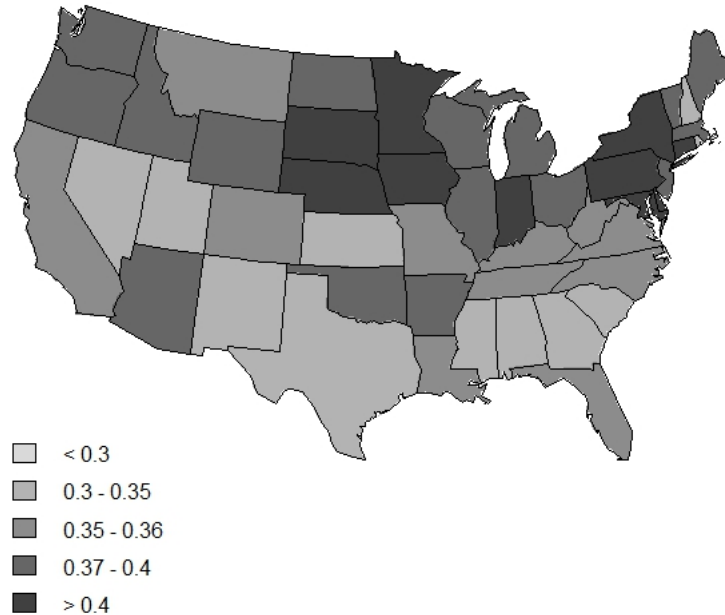


Figure 2.4: Average Sermon Score by State

(Olson, 2000; Crawford and Olson, 2001). These studies suggest that the greater needs of disadvantaged communities draw activist oriented clergy into low-status areas and stimulate pastors to become community leaders. However, contexts may also generate calls for clergy political activity by placing more politically engaged citizens in the pews. In particular, neighborhoods with more politically interested and involved residents may increase demands for pastors to provide more overtly political information in their sermons. This section evaluates relationships between the explicitness of sermons and several indirect measures of neighborhood political engagement: neighborhood socio-economic status, racial and ethnic composition, age composition, residential mobility, and electoral competition.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>All demographic context data were obtained from the 2000 U.S. Census and political competition data were obtained from the *CQ Voting and Elections Collection*.

It is well-established that individuals with more resources are more attentive to and active in politics (e.g., Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). Those with more education and higher incomes have the interest and skills to participate in politics and are better able to bear the opportunity costs of political involvement. Consequently, demands for explicitly political messages should be greater in higher socio-economic status areas. Consistent with this expectation, sermon scores are positively correlated with the county percent with at least a high school education (Spearman  $\rho=0.17$  ( $p < 0.001$ )). In contrast, sermon explicitness is negatively correlated with the county percent unemployed (Spearman  $\rho=-0.09$  ( $p < 0.001$ )) and percent living at or below the poverty line (Spearman  $\rho=-0.15$  ( $p < 0.001$ )).<sup>25</sup>

Racial and ethnic disparities in socio-economic status and, thus, levels of political engagement also have consequences for the distribution of explicitly political sermons. Given that African Americans and Latinos have less education and lower incomes than whites, lower levels of political engagement among blacks and Latinos (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995) should produce less overtly political sermons in neighborhoods more heavily populated by these minority groups. Indeed, sermon scores are lower in counties with a larger percentage of black (Spearman  $\rho=-0.09$  ( $p < 0.001$ )) and Hispanic (Spearman  $\rho=-0.02$  ( $p < 0.001$ )) residents and higher in counties with larger proportions of white residents (Spearman  $\rho=0.10$  ( $p < 0.001$ )).<sup>26</sup>

Age and residential stability also influence forms of political engagement (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). As people grow older, they gain knowledge about the political process, become more attached to political parties, and acquire skills necessary to participate in

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<sup>25</sup>Evaluations of relationships between sermon scores and county percent with a B.A., percent with a M.A., percent with a professional degree, percent living at or below two times the poverty line, median house hold income, mean household income, and per capita income all confirm that higher status neighborhoods have more explicit sermons.

<sup>26</sup>When the sermon meta-data is used to identify the racial composition of congregations, sermons from black and Hispanic churches are less explicit than those from multi-ethnic, white and Asian congregations (Kruskal-Wallis  $\chi^2(4)=380.23$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). A multiple comparison test confirms that pairwise differences between sermons from black and white, black and Asian, Hispanic and white, Hispanic and Asian, and Hispanic and multi-ethnic congregations are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

politics. Compared to those who have recently relocated, individuals with well established ties to their communities are more likely to be politically involved, experiencing fewer costs to participation, including the need to re-register to vote. With larger shares of politically engaged citizens, neighborhoods with older residents and less residential turnover should have more overtly political sermons. As expected, sermons from areas with a larger proportion of its population over the age of 35 (Spearman  $\rho=0.08$  ( $p < 0.001$ )) and areas with a smaller percent of its population having recently moved into the county from a different state (Spearman  $\rho=-0.04$  ( $p < 0.001$ )) are more explicitly political.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, attention to and participation in politics may be higher in more electorally competitive areas. Close elections generate more intense political campaigns, with campaign spending and ads, direct mail efforts and candidate visits being concentrated in competitive areas (Hill and McKee, 2005; Shaw, 2006; Hillygus and Shields, 2008). This increased campaign attention heightens political interest and involvement among those who are otherwise less politically engaged (Gimpel, Kaufmann and Pearson-Merkowitz, 2007). More generally, voter turnout is higher in swing states than safe states (Hill and McKee, 2005; Lipsitz, 2009). Increased levels of political engagement in electorally competitive areas should generate more explicitly political messages by clergy. Accordingly, sermons from more competitive counties in the 2008 presidential election have higher scores than those from electorally safe areas (Spearman  $\rho=0.05$  ( $p < 0.001$ )).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>The positive correlation between age and sermon scores holds for county percent over 45, 55 and 65 as well. The negative relationship between mobility and sermon scores hold for the percent having recently moved from a different county and the percent having recently moved at all.

<sup>28</sup>The measure of county electoral competitiveness is based on the two-party Democratic presidential vote share and ranges from zero to one, with higher values indicating more competitive areas. It was calculated as follows: Competitiveness =  $1 - |(Two\ Party\ Democratic\ Vote\ Share - 0.5) * 2|$ . The positive correlation between sermon score and competitiveness holds when 2004 and 2000 Presidential election data are used. However, when the year in which a sermon was contributed is considered, the relationship between sermon scores and district competition is reversed for data from 2000.



## 2.5 Discussion

Using novel data and methods, this analysis has provided the first systematic evaluation of explicitly political messaging by clergy and the conditions under which clergy are more or less likely to engage in overtly political cue-giving. It demonstrates that most sermons do not contain explicitly political cues. Furthermore, explicitly political speech varies based on theological ideology and neighborhood levels of political engagement. Across three measures capturing differences in theological beliefs, including mainline versus evangelical tradition, geographical region and partisan context, important distinctions in how clergy incorporate politically relevant information into their sermons emerge. Sermons from mainline pastors, the Northeast and Midwest, and more Democratic areas are more overtly political than those from evangelical pastors, the South and more Republican counties. Clergy also engage in more explicitly political cue-giving in neighborhoods with larger proportions of citizens that are likely to be politically engaged, including higher socio-economic status areas, contexts with fewer racial and ethnic minorities, neighborhoods with older and more stable residents, and counties with more competitive elections.

These findings have several implications. First, the rarity of explicitly political speech raises important questions regarding the nature of clergy influence. Although several studies indicate that clergy impact congregant beliefs and behaviors by engaging in political cue-giving (e.g., Welch et al., 1993; Cavendish, 2001; Fetzer, 2001; Campbell and Monson, 2003; Bjarnason and Welch, 2004; Smith, 2005; Mulligan, 2006), works have failed to examine whether explicitly and implicitly political messages have different effects. Research on political sophistication, cognitive schemas and implicit messaging indicates that the persuasiveness of clergy cues depends on the explicitness of references to politics (see, e.g., Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996*b*; Zaller, 1992; Lau and Sears, 1986; White, 2007; McConaughy et al., 2010; Mendelberg, 2001; Albertson, 2006). Given that explicit and implicit political appeals may have different effects, the lack of overtly political content in sermons suggests the need to

examine whether and how the explicitness of messages conditions clergy influence in order to fully understand the political consequences of clergy communications.

Second, theological differences in explicitly political speech suggest that ideological coherence and ambivalence produce distinctive styles of clergy political cue-giving. Although clergy from different theological traditions may be equally likely to discuss politically relevant issues (e.g., Guth et al., 1997), this analysis shows that mainline pastors deliver more overtly political messages than evangelical clergy. Of course, the precise role of theological beliefs and consistent versus inconsistent views regarding solutions to socio-moral problems is uncertain. However, my findings indicate the need to evaluate the ways in which doctrinal beliefs and social theologies relate to how, and not simply whether, clergy address politically relevant issues.

Third, my analysis enhances our understanding of how socio-economic contexts influence clergy activity. Existing examinations emphasize that clergy from low-status areas are more likely to be politically engaged because of the greater needs in disadvantaged areas (Olson, 2000; Crawford and Olson, 2001). My results, however, suggest that church leaders engage in more explicitly political actions, that is, cue-giving behaviors, in high-status neighborhoods. These disparate conclusions indicate that implicitly political and explicitly political forms of clergy involvement have distinct relationships to neighborhood socio-economic conditions. While involvement on implicitly political issues, such as poverty relief and crime prevention, is higher in low-status areas given the greater need for community outreach on basic socio-moral concerns, explicitly political messaging rises in high-status areas because of increased levels of political engagement among neighborhood residents.

Finally, these results have important implications for the role of churches in the reinforcement or reduction of political inequality. Low income, less educated and racial minority groups are the least likely to be knowledgeable, interested, and active in politics, not to mention mobilized by political parties and candidates (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). My findings suggest that these resource poor groups may also be the least likely to receive explic-

itly political messages in church. Those with the weakest attachments to politics may attend churches that present the fewest opportunities to learn about politics, including candidates and ballot issues, and generate the fewest requests for congregants to take part in politics (see also McDaniel and McClerking, 2005). My analysis does not formally test this hypothesis. While geographic proximity is a constraint on the church selection process (McKenzie, 2004), the demographic composition of counties may not accurately reflect the composition of churches. Additionally, although sermons may contain the largest proportion of explicit cues during worship services (see Brewer, Kersh and Petersen, 2003), overt messages may be delivered in other settings of congregational life, such as organized groups and informal discussions. Finally, apart from providing explicit cues, churches may offer congregants opportunities to develop civic skills that are fundamental to political participation (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). Regardless, this evaluation does demonstrate that the dissemination of overtly political information and attempts at political mobilization by clergy through sermons is unequally distributed across contexts in ways that can increase existing political inequalities.

### **3 Activating Religious Thinking in Politics: the Efficacy of Implicitly (vs. Explicitly) Political Cues in Religious Messages**

Every national election, Americans are reminded of the prominent role that religious institutions play in shaping the political beliefs and behaviors of a sizable portion of the American electorate. From media reports of churches and their leaders attempting to persuade and mobilize their flocks, to poll results linking candidate preferences and voter turnout to religious affiliations and church membership, even casual observers of American politics glean what scholars of religion and politics have long known: religion is critically important in determining individual political behavior. Indeed, more than two decades of research has demonstrated that religious factors, such as religious denomination, theological ideology, worship attendance and participation in church activities, influence a wide range of political outcomes, including candidate preferences, partisanship, political ideology, policy attitudes, psychological engagement with politics, voter participation and non-electoral activity (e.g., Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995; Greenberg, 2000; Harris, 1999; Campbell and Monson, 2003; Bjarnason and Welch, 2004; Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006; Mulligan, 2006).

Despite the sustained attention to connections between faith and politics, scholars have yet to fully understand the source of religious influence. Many accounts identify the communication of politically relevant information in churches as a key mechanism impacting

congregants' political attitudes and participation (Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988, 1990; Welch and Legee, 1991; Jelen, 1992*a,b*; Jelen and Wilcox, 1993; Welch et al., 1993; Greenberg, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Fetzer, 2001; Bjarnason and Welch, 2004; Smith, 2005; Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006; Mulligan, 2006). Although there is significant evidence that political messages are disseminated at church (e.g., Beatty and Walter, 1988, 1989; Guth et al., 1997; Olson, 2000; Brewer, Kersh and Petersen, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2003; Smidt, 2004*a*), few studies directly evaluate the effect of these communications. Works that do provide inconsistent results and fail to consider the conditions under which political cues might be more or less influential (Welch et al., 1993; Greenberg, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Olson, Guth and Guth, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2006; Harris-Lacewell, 2007; Djupe and Gilbert, 2009).

Thus, this paper reevaluates role of religious political cue-giving as a mechanism of religious influence. Focusing on the Christian religious context, I use an experiment to assess the casual effect of political cues in Christian religious messages on the political salience of Christian religious orientations. Moreover, applying a central framework from research on political communication, I examine whether, how and why the explicitness of political appeals conditions religious influence. I demonstrate that while political content in Christian religious messages does influence Christians' political behavior, implicitly political cues are more likely than explicitly political appeals to encourage reliance on Christian religious considerations and shape Christians' political orientations. Specifically, political cues that make indirect rather than direct references to political objects are more likely to activate Christian theological beliefs in determining the political and moral issue evaluations of more theologically conservative Christians as well as heighten the salience of Christian religious group affiliation in augmenting levels of political engagement and participation. Moreover, I show that explicit messages that violate principles of church-state separation heighten Christians' discomfort with religious institutions' involvement in politics more than implicit messages. This helps explain the greater efficacy of implicit relative to explicit political appeals in religious communications.

### 3.1 Political Cue-Giving: A Mechanism of Religious influence

Numerous studies suggest that political cues disseminated at church help explain the influence of religion on individual politics (Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988, 1990; Welch and Leege, 1991; Jelen, 1992*a,b*; Jelen and Wilcox, 1993; Welch et al., 1993; Greenberg, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Fetzer, 2001; Bjarnason and Welch, 2004; Smith, 2005; Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006; Mulligan, 2006). Scholars contend that the interweaving of political content into statements from the pulpit, conversations with fellow parishioners, bulletins and other church publications exposes congregants to persuasive forms of political communication. These cues are believed to influence not only congregants' political beliefs but also their psychological orientations towards politics and tendencies to become politically involved. By providing religious interpretations of politically relevant issues, cues make religious considerations relevant to political thinking, encouraging parishioners to adopt political attitudes consistent with their religious beliefs and values. Moreover, by relaying opportunities to become civically and politically involved and defining such involvement as essential to membership in the religious community, messages enhance congregants' psychological attachments to politics as well as participation in the political process.

The notion that individuals encounter politically relevant messages at church that influence their political behavior is intuitively appealing. However, there is little direct and consistent evidence demonstrating that churchgoers respond to cues received. Most conclusions regarding the effects of political stimuli are speculative, relying on indirect assessments of communication (Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988, 1990; Welch and Leege, 1991; Jelen, 1992*a,b*; Jelen and Wilcox, 1993; Fetzer, 2001; Bjarnason and Welch, 2004; Smith, 2005; Beyerlein and Hipp, 2006; Mulligan, 2006). These works assume the mediating role of cues based on relationships observed between religious variables, such as theological ideology, clergy opinion, and church involvement, and political outcomes.

Other studies overcome the problem of inferred communication, relying on a more direct approach to measuring and evaluating the impact of cues using surveys of clergy and congregants or ethnographic interviews and observation (Welch et al., 1993; Greenberg, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Olson, Guth and Guth, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2006; Harris-Lacewell, 2007; Djupe and Gilbert, 2009). However, these works have failed to uncover a consistent relationship between political communication and behavior. While some scholars indicate that political messages in clergy communications and discussions with fellow church members impact congregants' issue attitudes, civic orientations and political mobilization (Welch et al., 1993; Greenberg, 2000; Cavendish, 2001; Harris-Lacewell, 2007), others find that political cues have no direct effect (Olson, Guth and Guth, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2006) or a mixed influence depending on the political outcomes evaluated (Djupe and Gilbert, 2009).

One explanation for these inconsistent results is purely methodological: previous research relies on survey self-reports, small samples from ethnographic research, and observational data, which all constrain the reliability of causal inferences made. Indeed, scholars that find limited evidence for the persuasive effects of political cues acknowledge this possibility: identifying a negative relationship between individual's civic skill development and exposure to political messages from clergy, Djupe and Gilbert (2006) explain, "In this case, we would argue that the relationship is not causal" (125).

An alternative account, however, suggests that the relationship between political communication and individual politics is more complicated than previously considered. There may be factors that condition audience receptivity to messages; and thus, failing to attend to these factors, prior research has found inconclusive results. Of central theoretical concern, then, is the identification of conditions that might augment or diminish congregants' responsiveness to political cues received at church.

## 3.2 Distinguishing the Effects Explicit and Implicit Cues

Previous research on political communication helps to clarify such conditions. In particular, a crucial insight from scholarship on political communication is that the effectiveness of political cues may depend on the explicitness of content (e.g. Mendelberg, 2001). Whether political cues are explicit – transmitted in overt discussions of political topics such as elections, politicians and policy – or implicit – conveyed through subtext in discussions of economic, social, moral or cultural issues only indirectly tied to politics – may be critical in determining when and how congregants respond to political appeals in religious messages.

The distinction between explicit and implicit communication has been a central framework in scholarship on political communication. Indeed, many studies have documented differences in the influence of campaign appeals, specifically racial campaign appeals, when cues are explicit versus implicit (Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley, 2005; White, 2007; McConaughy et al., 2010). A core result in these works is that implicit appeals are more effective than explicit cues when explicit messages clearly violate well-accepted norms. In particular, Mendelberg (2001) demonstrates that campaign appeals with explicitly racial content are less likely to activate whites’ anti-black racial predispositions than racially ambiguous messages. This is because explicitly racial appeals clearly infringe on principles of racial equality while implicitly racial cues avoid consciously violating egalitarian norms. This finding of the greater efficacy of implicit versus explicit racial cues in shaping whites’ political attitudes is robust and has been replicated across multiple studies (Valentino, Hutchings and White, 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley, 2005; White, 2007)(but see, Huber and Lapinski, 2006, 2008; Mendelberg, 2008).

Although developed in the context of racial campaign communications, this model of how explicit and implicit cues can elicit different responses may apply to religious political cue-giving as well. In particular, parishioners may respond differently to explicitly and im-



plicitly political cues in religious messages given norms regarding the proper role of religious institutions in political affairs. Polls indicate that many Americans support the principle church-state separation. Not only does a majority of the public believe that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters,<sup>1</sup> but public opposition to highly politicized activities by religious institutions, such as endorsing candidates for political office, is even greater.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, public discomfort with religious institutions' involvement in politics has steadily increased over the past two decades.<sup>3,4</sup>

Consequently, norms of church-state separation may constrain the influence of explicitly political cues in religious messages.<sup>5</sup> As explicitly political appeals clearly violate well-accepted standards of limited church involvement in politics, congregants may resist such cues and censor the application of their faith in political decisions. On the other hand, inso-

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<sup>1</sup>A March 2012 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center found that while 54% of Americans agreed that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters, only 40% of respondents believed that churches should express their views on day-to-day social and political questions. See Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. March 2012 Political Survey. Final Topline. Q58.

<sup>2</sup>A June-July 2012 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center indicates that only 27% of Americans believe that churches and other houses of worship should come out in favor of one candidate over another during political elections. See Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. July 2012 Religion and Politics Survey. Q41.

<sup>3</sup>In 1996, 43% of Americans agreed that churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters while 54% agreed that churches should express their views on day-to-day social and political questions. See Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. March 2012 Political Survey. Final Topline. Q58.

<sup>4</sup>Public support for church-state separation may seem surprising given the success of politicians, such as President George W. Bush, who discuss their religious beliefs in order to garner electoral support. However, the public is more supportive of expressions of religious faith by political candidates and leaders than of church involvement in political affairs. Recent surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center indicate that a majority of the public is not uncomfortable with politicians talking about how religious they are (52%) or their religious faith and beliefs (57%); agrees that a president should have strong religious beliefs (67%); and disagrees that there has been too much expression of religious faith and prayer by political leaders (55%) (See Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, July 2012 Religion and Politics Survey Q43F1, Q44F2, Q45 and March 2012 Political Survey Final Topline, Q59). Thus, given public support for religious expression by politicians, it may be a reasonable (and quite effective) electoral strategy to integrate religious messages into campaign appeals. Indeed, research suggests that Christians' attitudes, specifically implicit attitudes, towards candidates improve when exposed to campaign messages with religious language versus candidate statements lacking religious content (Albertson, 2011).

<sup>5</sup>Indeed, others have speculated that the strong tradition of church-state separation might limit the political influence of churches and clergy (Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988; Hadden, 1969). However, they have not considered or evaluated how congregants' receptivity to political cues might be conditioned by the explicitness of political content.

far as political appeals remain implicit, seemingly avoiding religious-political entanglement, parishioners may remain receptive to political cues; religious considerations may unconsciously influence political behavior.

The foregoing discussion leads to the following expectations regarding the effects of political cues in religious messages on congregants' political behavior.

- H1: Compared to religious statements lacking political appeals, messages containing political cues, whether they be explicit or implicit, should be more likely to activate religious thinking in politics, (a) supporting the adoption of political attitudes consistent with individuals' religious beliefs and (b) stimulating political engagement and participation.
- H2: Compared to religious statements with explicitly political cues, messages containing implicitly political appeals should be more likely to prime religious considerations, (a) encouraging political evaluations that complement individuals' religious beliefs and (b) heightening psychological attachments to politics and political involvement.
- H3: Compared to religious statements with explicitly political content, messages containing implicitly political appeals should be less likely to increase discomfort with religious involvement in politics – i.e., increase support for church-state separation.

### **3.3 A Christian Religious Context**

In assessing these propositions, I focus on the influence of political cues in religious messages in the context of Christianity, the largest religion in the U.S. Thus, of particular interest is the impact of political appeals embedded in Christian religious statements on the salience of Christian religious orientations in determining the political behavior of Christians. I define Christian religious statements as those messages that individuals might receive at a Christian church – i.e., statements containing Christian references, such as those from the

Bible. In examining the influence of cues on the salience of Christian religious considerations, I focus on two orientations that might become relevant to political attitudes, engagement and participation: Christian theological beliefs and religious identification.

Theological beliefs, or doctrinal views regarding the divine and man's relationship to it, are important determinants of political attitudes among Christians (e.g., Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth, 2009; Guth et al., 1997; Kellstedt and Smidt, 1993; Beatty and Walter, 1989; Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988). Given the focus of conservative Christian theology on matters of personal morality and "traditional" moral standards and the greater emphasis of liberal Christian theology on eradicating social problems and matters of social justice, theologically conservative Christians are more likely to adopt more conservative political evaluations than their theologically liberal counterparts. The centrality of Christians' theological beliefs to their political views suggests that political cues will prime Christians' theological considerations in shaping their political attitudes. Moreover, given the directional effects of theological beliefs on political attitudes, Christians should have distinct responses to cues according to their theological ideology: more theologically conservative (liberal) Christians should express greater political conservatism (liberalism) in their political evaluations in response to religious political messages.

However, theological differences are less relevant in determining Christians' political engagement and participation (see Olson, 2007; Guth et al., 1997; Beatty and Walter, 1989).<sup>6</sup> Instead, broader religious orientations, such as Christian religious identification, are salient predictors of psychological and participatory orientations towards politics. Indeed, religious group identity becomes particularly relevant when congregants are exposed to cues that frame civic and political activity as integral to membership in the religious community (e.g., Greenberg, 2000; Fetzer, 2001). Thus, political cues should increase Christians' political

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<sup>6</sup>Although early research suggested that the "otherworldly" orientations of theological conservatives that stressed personal salvation and the afterlife depressed political engagement and activity among theological conservatives (Hadden, 1969; Stark et al., 1971; Quinley, 1974), more recent works indicate that theologically liberal Christians are no more interested or involved in the political process than their conservative counterparts (Olson, 2007; Guth et al., 1997; Beatty and Walter, 1989).

engagement and participation by heightening the salience of Christian identity: Christians should display stronger psychological attachments to politics and greater tendencies to participate in politics in response to religious political messages.

## **3.4 Experimental Design**

In order to test my hypotheses, I use an experiment. Between September 26, 2012 and November 16, 2012, I recruited a convenience sample of subjects using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk).<sup>7</sup> The experiment involved three parts: a pre-test questionnaire, the experimental manipulation and a post-test questionnaire.

### **3.4.1 Pre-Test Questionnaire**

In the first part of the experiment, subjects completed a pre-test questionnaire that collected background information on respondents' demographic characteristics and religious preferences. Importantly, the pre-test allowed for the identification of Christian and non-Christian respondents and measurement of Christian respondents' theological beliefs – i.e., liberal, moderate or conservative theological leaning.

### **3.4.2 Experimental Conditions**

The second part contained the experimental manipulation. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: one control and two treatment conditions. In each condition, respondents read a Christian religious passage that was identified as an excerpt from a sermon. In the control condition, the passage briefly interpreted the biblical story of Peter's Denial, where the Apostle Peter chooses to deny knowledge of Jesus following Jesus' arrest.

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<sup>7</sup>MTurk is an online platform for hiring individuals to complete tasks that require human intelligence, or Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs). It provides a useful tool for subject recruitment and is becoming increasingly popular as source for convenience samples in social science research, especially experimental studies (e.g., Arceneaux, 2012; Crawford and Pilanski, 2012; Huber and Paris, 2013). See Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) for a discussion of the advantages and limitations of MTurk Samples.

Focusing on the religious relevance of the story, the excerpt discussed the implications of Peter's Denial for religious behavior.

*Control Condition:* Instructions: Please read the following passage. (An excerpt from the sermon, "How Will You Be Remembered?") Today, we'll look at Peter's Denial (Matthew 26: 69-75). In this instance, Peter chooses to deny Christ because his faith fails him. Many of us have been where Peter was at that moment, when our faith is tested and we choose the path of denial. It is easy to claim to be Christians but living out that life and standing firm for the lord is the real test of how serious we are. We must learn from Peter's denial and never conceal our commitment to Christ.

In the two treatment conditions, the excerpts started with the same text as the control condition, but the endings were manipulated to include either explicitly or implicitly political commentary. In the explicit version, the statement addressed the implications of the religious story for political behavior, explaining that individuals must "vote their values."

*Explicit Condition:* We must learn from Peter's denial and never conceal our commitment to Christ, even if it's not the popular thing to do in our American culture today. This means holding strong to our religious beliefs and moral values through our words and actions in our everyday lives, not just in church or at home but also when we're out in our communities and in the voting booth this election in November.

In contrast, the implicit condition avoided overt references to politics. Instead, it emphasized the socio-cultural importance of the story.

*Implicit Condition:* We must learn from Peter's denial and never conceal our commitment to Christ, even if it's not the popular thing to do in our American culture today. This means holding strong to our religious beliefs and moral values through our words and actions in our everyday lives, not just in church or at home but also when we're out in our communities.

### 3.4.3 Post-Test Questionnaire

After reading the excerpt, respondents moved on to the third part of the experiment where they completed a post-test questionnaire. Responses to the questionnaire were used to construct five sets of measures capturing subjects' political preferences, moral issue attitudes, psychological engagement with politics, tendency to participate in politics and attitudes towards church-state separation. For ease of interpretation, all measures were re-scaled to run between zero and one.

**Political Preferences:** Six indicators of political preferences were constructed from the post-test: 2012 presidential vote intention (Vote Obama; 0=No, 1=Yes)(Vote Romney; 0=No, 1=Yes); candidate thermometer ratings (Warmth Obama; Higher Values=Greater Warmth)(Warmth Romney; Higher Values=Greater Warmth); partisan identification (Party; Seven point scale from strong Republican to strong Democrat); and political ideology (Ideology; Seven point scale from extremely conservative to extremely liberal).<sup>8</sup>

**Moral Issue Attitudes:** Four questions were used to measure subjects moral issue attitudes. They assessed how much subjects agreed or disagreed with the following four statements: (1) 'The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes' (Adjust View); (2) 'The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society' (New Lifestyles); (3) 'We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own' (More Tolerant); (4) 'This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties' (Traditional Family). All responses were coded so that morally conservative responses received lower scores on a five point scale. Although these questions capture broader beliefs about moral standards in society rather than specific po-

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<sup>8</sup>Data on vote intention is only available for subjects who participated in the experiment prior to the election on November 6, 2012 (N Control = 244, N Explicit = 290, N Implicit = 266). Data on feeling thermometers is only available for subjects who participated in the experiment after the election on November 6, 2012 (N Control = 102, N Explicit = 105, N Implicit = 98).

litical attitudes,<sup>9</sup> moral values have been linked to religious beliefs (Wilcox, Jelen and Legee, 1993; Guth and Green, 1993) and shown to be important determinants of political behavior (Knuckey, 2007; Mulligan, 2008). As a result, these moral issue items were included in the post-test questionnaire and the influence of political cues on individuals' responses to these questions is assessed below.

Political Engagement: Five measures of political engagement were used: interest in political campaigns (Political Interest); strength of vote intention (Vote Strength); strength of partisan attachments (Party Strength); strength of political ideology (Ideological Strength); and strength of, or absolute difference in, thermometer ratings for Obama and Romney (Thermometer Strength). All measures were coded so that higher values indicated greater psychological engagement.<sup>10</sup>

Political Participation: Four measures of political participation were constructed from the post-test. The first indicated whether or not respondents expected to vote in the 2012 national election (Vote). The remaining three assessed how likely subjects were to participate in each of the following activities: (1) Attend a meeting, rally, speech, dinner, or events like that in support of a candidate for public office (Meeting Attendance); (2) Give money to an individual candidate or political party (Donate); (3) Talk to people and try to show them why they should vote for or against one of the parties or candidates (Persuade). All responses were coded so that higher scores indicated a greater likelihood of participation.<sup>11</sup>

Church-State Separation: Two questions were used to measure attitudes towards church and state separation. The first asked whether respondents believed that churches should keep out of political matters or express their views on political questions (Churches Keep Out).

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<sup>9</sup>Wording and response options for these items were derived from standard questions in the American National Election Studies.

<sup>10</sup>Data on strength of vote intention is only available for subjects who participated in the experiment prior to the election on November 6, 2012 (N Control = 226, N Explicit = 261, N Implicit = 240). Data on strength of thermometer scores is only available for subjects who participated in the experiment after the election on November 6, 2012 (N Control = 102, N Explicit = 105, N Implicit = 98).

<sup>11</sup>Data on voting participation is only available for subjects who participated in the experiment prior to the election on November 6, 2012 (N Control = 244, N Explicit = 290, N Implicit = 266).

The second evaluated whether individuals felt that there was too much, the right amount or too little expression of faith by political leaders (Politicians Avoid Faith). Responses to both of these questions were coded so that support for greater religious involvement in political affairs by churches and politicians received lower scores.

## **3.5 Analysis**

Using the experimental data, I test my expectations regarding the role of political cue-giving as a source of religious influence and the distinctiveness of explicit and implicit cues. I begin by analyzing the effect of politically relevant messages – that is, both explicit and implicit cues – on political preferences, moral values, political engagement and political participation. Then, I reevaluate the influence of political cues, distinguishing explicit and implicit appeals, and consider why the explicitness of political cues conditions effects.

### **3.5.1 The Effect of Political Cues**

In this section, I examine whether exposure political cues activates religious considerations in political decision-making. First, I test H1a, modeling Christian subjects’ political and moral issue attitudes as linear functions of exposure to political cues, with the control condition as the baseline category; a pre-treatment measure of theological ideology, with higher values indicating more conservative theological beliefs; and an interaction between exposure to political cues and theological ideology. Then, I evaluate H1b, modeling subjects’ political engagement and likelihood of political participation as linear functions of exposure to political cues, with the control condition as the baseline category; a pre-treatment indicator of Christian religious affiliation; and an interaction between exposure to political cues and Christian affiliation.

Results from the assessment of H1a are reported in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. They demonstrate that exposure to politically relevant appeals has no effect on the political evaluations or moral



issue attitudes of theologically liberal individuals. Across the columns in both tables, the coefficients for the main effect of exposure to political cues are not statistically significant. Political cues do not prime theological considerations in determining the political and moral issue attitudes of theologically liberal individuals. Similarly, the non-statistically significant coefficients on the interaction term in Table 3.1 suggest that political cues fail to activate theological beliefs and influence the political attitudes of theological conservatives as well. Exposure to politically relevant messages does not encourage more conservative political preferences with respect to candidates, political ideology, or partisan identification among those who are more theologically conservative.

However, political cues do appear to impact theological conservatives' moral issue attitudes (Table 3.2). In particular, exposure to the treatment conditions encouraged greater disagreement with the belief that the country would have fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties among more theologically conservative individuals. Thus, while political appeals do influence the moral issue evaluations of theological conservatives, they do not prime theological considerations according to H1a. Rather than encourage theological conservatives to adopt more conservative moral issue attitudes, political cues interact with theological ideology to promote more liberal moral values. This suggests that political appeals may have unintended consequences, provoking individuals to adopt views that are inconsistent with their religious beliefs. I discuss this result in greater detail below when distinguishing the effects of explicit and implicit appeals.

Findings from the evaluation of H1b are reported in Tables 3.3 and 3.4. The estimates clearly demonstrate that political cues have no direct effect on engagement or participation, suggesting that non-Christians are unmoved by political appeals in religious messages. The coefficients on the interaction term in Table 3.4 also indicate that political cues do not increase the participatory tendencies of Christians either. However, there is some evidence that political appeals do matter when it comes to heightening the political salience of Christian identification in determining levels of psychological engagement with politics. Estimates in

Table 3.1: Effect of Political Cues on Political Preferences

	Party	Ideology	Vote Romney	Vote Obama	Warmth Obama	Warmth Romney
Intercept	0.75*** (0.06)	0.72*** (0.06)	0.21** (0.11)	0.76*** (0.11)	0.79*** (0.08)	0.20** (0.08)
Political Cue	0.05 (0.07)	0.05 (0.07)	-0.07 (0.13)	-0.01 (0.13)	0.01 (0.10)	0.03 (0.09)
Theology	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.17*** (0.04)	0.21*** (0.07)	-0.21*** (0.07)	-0.16*** (0.05)	0.11** (0.05)
Political Cue *Theology	-0.02 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.09)	0.05 (0.09)	-0.04 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)
Num. obs.	477	477	274	274	203	203

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table 3.2: Effect of Political Cues on Moral Issue Attitudes

	Adjust View	New Lifestyles	More Tolerant	Traditional Family
Intercept	0.63*** (0.06)	0.72*** (0.06)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.60*** (0.05)
Political Cue	0.01 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.07)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.10 (0.06)
Theo	-0.11*** (0.04)	-0.15*** (0.04)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.03)
Political Cue *Theology	0.00 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	0.07* (0.04)
Num. obs.	477	477	476	476

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table 3.3 show that Christian respondents express stronger preferences for their candidate of choice when exposed to messages with versus without political content.

Taken together, these results counter H1a and provide only partial support for H1b. Cues that offer religious interpretations of politically relevant issues do not prime theological considerations in order to produce political and moral issue evaluations consistent with theological beliefs. The opinions of theological liberals are unaffected by political appeals, and more theologically conservative individuals seem to adopt more liberal, rather than conservative, moral issue attitudes in response to political cues. Furthermore, messages that link religious beliefs and values to sociopolitical issues fail to mobilize Christians to take part in politics and have only a limited impact on Christians' psychological attachments to

Table 3.3: Effect of Political Cues on Political Engagement

	Party Strength	Ideological Strength	Vote Choice Strength	Thermometer Strength	Political Interest
Intercept	0.59*** (0.02)	0.59*** (0.02)	0.75*** (0.04)	0.54*** (0.04)	0.51*** (0.02)
Political Cue	-0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.06)	0.00 (0.03)
Christian	0.05 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.14** (0.06)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.05 (0.03)
Political Cue *Christian	0.03 (0.04)	0.01 (0.04)	0.21*** (0.07)	0.03 (0.07)	0.02 (0.04)
Num. obs.	1103	1104	727	305	1088

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table 3.4: Effect of Political Cues on Political Participation

	Vote	Meeting Attendance	Donate	Persuade
Intercept	0.79*** (0.03)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.27*** (0.02)
Political Cue	0.01 (0.04)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)
Christian	0.07 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)
Political Cue *Christian	0.01 (0.06)	0.05 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.01 (0.04)
Num. obs.	800	1084	1085	1084

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

politics. These findings indicate that political cue-giving, overall, plays a rather limited role in facilitating religious influence.

### 3.5.2 The Distinctiveness of Implicit and Explicit Political Appeals

However, it may be that Christians' receptivity to appeals depends on the explicitness of political content in religious messages (H2). Thus, I reevaluate the influence of political cues, distinguishing the effects of explicit and implicit political appeals. First, I test H2a, examining the relative efficacy of each type of political message at priming theological considerations

in Christians' political and moral issue evaluations. Then, I assess H2b, evaluating whether explicit or implicit appeals are more likely to increase political engagement and participation by heightening the salience of Christian religious identification.

In order to test H2a and H2b, I model respondents' outcomes as before when evaluating H1a and H1b, respectively; but, instead of a single measure of cue exposure, I include unique indicators of exposure to implicit and explicit cues. I also conduct additional assessments of differences in subjects' outcomes across the explicit and implicit conditions, with the explicit condition as the baseline category. In the tables that follow, odd columns present the effects of exposure to political messages relative to the control condition and even columns report the effects of exposure to the implicit message relative to the explicit condition.

### **3.5.2.1 Effects on Political Preferences and Moral Values**

Examining the effects of cues on political preferences (Table 3.5), it is clear that compared to the control condition, neither the explicit nor implicit message has a direct effect on vote choice, candidate feeling thermometers, political ideology or partisanship. Similarly, when compared to the explicit condition, the implicit message has no main effect on these evaluations. Similar to the results above, these findings indicate that political cues do not prime theological beliefs among theological liberals; theologically liberal individuals are no more likely to rely on religious considerations when assessing political alternatives in response to a religious, explicitly political or implicitly political message.

However, the results for the interaction between the implicit message and theological beliefs indicate that exposure to the implicit appeal does heighten reliance on religious orientations in determining the political attitudes of theological conservatives. Although the political preferences of more theologically conservative individuals do not differ when exposed to the control versus either the implicit or explicit condition, theologically conservative individuals do adopt more negative thermometer ratings of Barack Obama and more positive thermometer scores for Mitt Romney when exposed to the implicit versus the explicit mes-

sage. In short, the implicit appeal was more effective than the explicit appeal at encouraging political attitudes consistent with religious beliefs among more theologically conservative individuals.

Similar results emerge when evaluating the effects of each condition on moral issue attitudes (Table 3.6). Again, across the columns, the main effects of the implicit and explicit condition are not statistically significant. Regardless of the overtness of political cues, political appeals do not influence the salience of theological beliefs in determining the moral issue attitudes of theologically liberal individuals. Among more theologically conservative individuals, however, implicit appeals are more effective than explicit messages at priming theological beliefs. In particular, examining support for the view that new lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society, it is clear that theologically conservative individuals are less likely to disagree with this belief when exposed to the implicit rather than the explicit message. That is, they adopt more conservative evaluations of new lifestyles when political cues are ambiguous rather than obvious.

The unexpected result found above – i.e., that political cues encourage more liberal moral issue attitudes among theological conservatives – is replicated in Table 3.6. Importantly, however, the movement of theological conservatives in a liberal direction only occurs in response to the explicit appeal. Exposure to the explicit versus the control condition not only prompted more theologically conservative individuals to express greater disagreement with the belief that the country would have fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties; it also increased theological conservatives' opposition to the belief that new lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society. Thus, religious messages with politically relevant content only appear to have unanticipated consequences, provoking theological conservatives to adopt moral issue attitudes inconsistent with their theological beliefs, when political cues are explicit. An explanation for this result is discussed below when considering why individuals respond differently to explicit and implicit cues.

Table 3.5: Effect of Implicit and Explicit Political Cues on Political Preferences

	Party		Ideology		Vote Romney		Vote Obama		Warmth Obama		Warmth Romney	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Intercept	0.75*** (0.06)	0.77*** (0.05)	0.72*** (0.06)	0.73*** (0.05)	0.21** (0.11)	0.20* (0.11)	0.76*** (0.11)	0.68*** (0.11)	0.79*** (0.08)	0.74*** (0.06)	0.20** (0.08)	0.29*** (0.06)
Implicit	0.08 (0.08)	0.05 (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)	0.07 (0.07)	-0.13 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.15)	0.08 (0.15)	0.17 (0.16)	0.06 (0.10)	0.12 (0.09)	-0.02 (0.10)	-0.11 (0.09)
Explicit	0.02 (0.08)		0.01 (0.07)		-0.02 (0.15)		-0.09 (0.16)		-0.06 (0.11)		0.09 (0.10)	
Theology	-0.16*** (0.04)	-0.15*** (0.04)	-0.17*** (0.04)	-0.13*** (0.03)	0.21*** (0.07)	0.17** (0.07)	-0.21*** (0.07)	-0.14* (0.07)	-0.16*** (0.05)	-0.12*** (0.05)	0.11** (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)
*Theology	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.10)	0.00 (0.10)	0.03 (0.10)	-0.04 (0.10)	-0.10 (0.07)	-0.14** (0.06)	0.09 (0.07)	0.15** (0.06)
Explicit	0.01 (0.05)		0.04 (0.05)		-0.04 (0.10)		0.07 (0.10)		0.04 (0.07)		-0.06 (0.07)	
*Theology												
Num. obs.	477	320	477	320	274	179	274	179	203	141	203	141

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table 3.6: Effect of Implicit and Explicit Political Cues on Moral Issue Attitudes

	Adjust View		New Lifestyles		More Tolerant		Traditional Family	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	0.63*** (0.06)	0.68*** (0.05)	0.72*** (0.06)	0.62*** (0.05)	0.80*** (0.05)	0.78*** (0.04)	0.60*** (0.05)	0.50*** (0.05)
Implicit	-0.03 (0.08)	-0.08 (0.07)	0.00 (0.08)	0.10 (0.07)	0.06 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	-0.10 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.07)
Explicit	0.05 (0.08)		-0.10 (0.08)		-0.02 (0.07)		-0.09 (0.07)	
Theology	-0.11*** (0.04)	-0.11*** (0.04)	-0.15*** (0.04)	-0.06* (0.04)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.06** (0.03)	-0.16*** (0.03)	-0.08** (0.03)
Implicit *Theology	0.01 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.10** (0.05)	-0.05 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.04)	0.06 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)
Explicit *Theology	0.00 (0.05)		0.09* (0.05)		0.01 (0.04)		0.08* (0.05)	
Num. obs.	477	320	477	320	476	319	476	319

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Overall, the results in Tables 3.5 and 3.6 offer support for H2a. Although theological liberals are not more likely to rely on their theological beliefs when exposed to an implicit versus an explicit cue, implicitly political messages are more effective than explicit appeals at priming religious considerations in shaping the political and moral evaluations of more theologically conservative individuals. The distinct responses of theological groups to political cues may reflect differences in ideological cohesion across theological traditions. In particular, while the tendency towards “scriptural relativism” in more theologically liberal traditions diminishes agreement on social, moral and political issues, the greater uniformity in religious beliefs among more theologically conservative churches promotes a more common sociopolitical outlook (Wald, Owen and Hill, 1990; Welch et al., 1993; Olson, 2007). Accordingly, when exposed to cues that encourage individuals to apply religious teachings to evaluations of political and moral issues, more theologically conservative Christians exhibit a stronger correspondence between their religious beliefs and attitudes than more theologically liberal Christians.

### 3.5.2.2 Effects on Political Engagement and Participation

Turning to the impact of cues on political engagement and participation, the results from the analysis of H2b are displayed in Tables 3.7 and 3.8. Across the columns in both tables, neither the explicit nor implicit appeal has a direct effect on outcomes, indicating that non-Christians are unresponsive to political cues in religious messages. In contrast, the coefficients on the interaction terms clearly demonstrate that implicit messages are more effective than religious or explicit appeals at heightening the salience of Christian identification in determining psychological orientations towards politics and tendencies to participate in politics. Relative to the control condition, both the explicit and implicit appeal strengthened candidate preferences among Christians. However, compared to Christians in the explicit condition, those in the implicit condition expressed stronger ideological commitments and greater political interest. Moreover, compared to the control condition, only the implicit cue increased the likelihood that Christians would attend a political meeting.

These results offer strong support for H2b. By linking Christian religious affiliation to norms of civic but not political involvement, religious messages with implicitly political content are more likely to prime Christian religious identification and increase political engagement and participation than religious statements with overtly political cues.



Table 3.7: Effect of Implicit and Explicit Political Cues on Political Engagement

	Party Strength (1)	(2)	Ideological Strength (3)	(4)	Vote Choice Strength (5)	(6)	Thermometer Strength (7)	(8)	Political Interest (9)	(10)
Intercept	0.59*** (0.02)	0.54*** (0.02)	0.59*** (0.02)	0.59*** (0.02)	0.75*** (0.04)	0.72*** (0.03)	0.54*** (0.04)	0.50*** (0.05)	0.51*** (0.02)	0.52*** (0.02)
Implicit	-0.01 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.06 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)	0.00 (0.07)	0.05 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.03)
Explicit	-0.05 (0.03)		0.01 (0.03)		-0.03 (0.05)		-0.05 (0.07)		0.01 (0.03)	
Christian	0.05 (0.04)	0.07** (0.03)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.14** (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)	0.05 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Implicit *Christian	0.05 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	0.13*** (0.05)	0.26*** (0.09)	0.09 (0.08)	0.02 (0.08)	-0.01 (0.09)	0.06 (0.04)	0.08* (0.04)
Explicit *Christian	0.02 (0.05)		-0.05 (0.05)		0.17* (0.08)		0.03 (0.08)		-0.01 (0.04)	
Num. obs.	1103	757	1104	758	727	501	305	203	1088	747

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Table 3.8: Effect of Implicit and Explicit Political Cues on Political Participation

	Vote		Meeting Attendance		Donate		Persuade	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Intercept	0.79*** (0.03)	0.80*** (0.03)	0.16*** (0.02)	0.17*** (0.02)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.13*** (0.02)	0.27*** (0.02)	0.25*** (0.02)
Implicit	0.00 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
Explicit	0.01 (0.04)		0.01 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.02)		-0.02 (0.03)	
Christian	0.07 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.05 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Implicit *Christian	0.03 (0.07)	0.04 (0.07)	0.07* (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.03 (0.04)
Explicit *Christian	-0.01 (0.07)		0.03 (0.04)		0.04 (0.04)		-0.01 (0.04)	
Num. obs.	800	556	1084	743	1085	744	1084	743

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

### 3.5.3 The Efficacy of Implicit Appeals and Maintenance of Church-State Separation

Overall, the analysis above demonstrates that while the communication of politically relevant information in religious messages does influence political behavior, implicitly political cues are more effective than explicitly political appeals. Religious messages with obscure rather than clearly discernible political content are more likely to activate Christian theological beliefs in determining political and moral issue attitudes among more theologically conservative individuals. Moreover, coded political appeals are more likely than overt cues to make Christian religious group identification salient in augmenting political engagement and participation.

What explains the greater efficacy of implicit relative to explicit cues? As discussed earlier, the norm of church-state separation may constrain the impact of explicit appeals on congregants' political behavior (H3). By directly addressing political topics, explicit messages fail to maintain a strict separation between church and state. The obvious violation

of principles of separation may increase Christian respondents' discomfort with connections between religion and politics, encouraging individuals to censor the application of their faith in political decisions. In contrast, by discussing issues only indirectly tied to politics, implicit messages seemingly adhere to norms of separation, allowing for the unconscious activation of Christian religious orientations.

Table 3.9 provides evidence to support these claims. It displays the influence of implicit versus explicit appeals on Christians' attitudes towards church-state separation. Although support for expressions of faith by political leaders does not differ based on cue exposure, Christians are more likely to believe that churches should keep out of political matters when exposed to the explicit rather than the implicit message.<sup>12</sup> Consistent with H3, explicit appeals increase opposition to religious involvement, particularly by churches, in politics. This discomfort may minimize Christians' receptivity to explicit appeals, explaining the greater influence of implicitly political messages.

The results in Table 3.9 also shed light on the unexpected consequences of explicit cues reported in Table 3.6. To reiterate, explicitly political appeals encourage more liberal rather than conservative moral issue attitudes among more theologically conservative Christians. This surprising result of may be the consequence of Christians' aversion to how overt cues violate the tradition of separation between church and state. Discomfort with explicit messages may encourage individuals to not simply suppress reliance on their theological beliefs; it may actually promote attitudes that counter their theological orientations.

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<sup>12</sup>The non-significant coefficient for the effect of the implicit condition in the second column of Table 3.9 indicates that cues that violate norms of church-state separation may be of little (negative) consequence to political candidates and leaders who incorporate religious content into their public statements. In particular, Christians do not become more opposed to expressions of faith by political leaders in response to explicit cues, suggesting that Christians may not penalize political elites for mixing religion and politics in their statements. Of course, as the implicit and explicit conditions in this experiment exposed individuals to political cues in the context of a religious message, i.e., a sermon, the evidence in Table 3.9 is purely suggestive. However, it may be that the patterns observed in this study of Christians' greater responsiveness to appeals that make implicit rather than explicit connections between religion and politics do not apply in the case of statements made by political elites.

Table 3.9: Effect of Implicit vs. Explicit Political Cues on Church-State Attitudes

	Churches Keep Out	Politicians Avoid Faith
Intercept	0.65*** (0.04)	0.53*** (0.03)
Implicit	-0.14** (0.05)	-0.04 (0.04)
Num. obs.	319	319

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

## 3.6 Discussion

This paper clearly demonstrates the efficacy of implicitly political cues in religious messages at influencing individual political behavior. Moreover, it highlights the importance of distinguishing the explicitness of political content in studies of political cue-giving and religious influence. When differences in explicit and implicit cues are neglected, political messages have a marginal influence on political behavior. In general, political appeals only impact the moral issue attitudes of more theologically conservative Christians and only enhance the strength of Christians' candidate preferences. Additionally, examining the effect of political cues overall produces unanticipated results; political cues impact moral issue attitudes in ways that contradict rather than cohere with theologically conservative religious beliefs. As with the findings in other research (Olson, Guth and Guth, 2003; Djupe and Gilbert, 2006, 2009), taken in isolation, these results raise questions regarding the centrality of political cue-giving as a mechanism of religious influence.

However, when key insights from research on political communication are considered (e.g., Mendelberg, 2001) and explicit and implicit cues are differentiated, it becomes clear that political cues do serve to connect religious beliefs and values to individual politics. Yet, not all political cues are equally effective at activating religious thinking in politics. Only implicit cues have a multidimensional influence on political behavior and a reinforcing effect on political attitudes and moral issue evaluations. Compared to religious messages, implicit

messages increase Christians' psychological attachments to politics as well as tendencies to become politically involved. Moreover, relative to explicit messages, implicit cues influence multiple forms of political engagement and impact political and moral attitudes in ways that complement theologically conservative beliefs. Thus, attending to the overtness of political messages not only confirms the long held belief that political cues received at church impact political attitudes and behavior (e.g., Wald, Owen and Hill, 1988); it also clarifies that it is implicit rather than explicit cues that drive relationships between religion and politics.

This study has important implications for strategies of persuasive communication in religious contexts and expectations regarding the locus of politicized religious communities. When religious institutions seek to influence the political behavior of their members, church authorities that rely on more indirect forms of cue-giving will be more effective. Rather than calling on parishioners to, for instance, oppose abortion policy and vote in elections, pastors seeking to persuade and mobilize their congregants are better served by broader appeals to the sanctity of life and community involvement. Accordingly, religious environments that favor implicit over explicit forms of political communication should be more likely to generate politicized religious groups. Indeed, in other work, I show that religious messages are least likely to be explicitly political in Southern churches, evangelical Protestant churches, and churches located in more Republican areas. That these churches avoid overt discussions of politics may help explain the greater political mobilization of the Christian Right than the religious Left.

## 4 Race, Residence, and Business Ownership: The Consequences of Minority Economic Empowerment for Out-Group Attitudes

With rising immigration from Latin America and Asia and the ever-declining residential segregation of blacks (Logan and Stults, 2011; Glaeser and Vigdor, 2012), communities across the U.S. are transforming into “multi-hued cities” and “melting-pot suburbs” (Frey, 2011). This increasing racial and ethnic diversity has made Americans more likely to come into contact with individuals of a different race or ethnicity than perhaps at any point in U.S. history. These inter-group interactions occur in a variety of settings: Americans increasingly experience diversity in their neighborhoods, schools, workplaces and local business establishments.

Scholars have long believed that these inter-group encounters profoundly shape how individuals perceive members of a different racial or ethnic background. One dominant body of scholarship explores the impact of *residential* interactions on out-group attitudes (e.g., Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Gay, 2006). Research in this vein debates whether residential proximity to out-groups spurs interracial comity or conflict given the competing expectations of contact theory (e.g., Allport, 1954) and threat theory (e.g., Key, 1949; Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). Although scholars disagree on the consequences of neighborhood contact, they agree that residential exposure to out-groups is vital in determining racial and ethnic attitudes.

However, scholarship to date has virtually ignored a second major form of inter-group interaction: economic exchanges. We argue that economic interactions with out-group members play a distinct role in shaping attitudes towards individuals of a different race or ethnicity. Taking the example of economic transactions with businesses owned by out-group members, we contend that these exchanges both facilitate contact with out-groups *and* provide salient indicators of the ethno-racial distribution of local economic power. Contact with economically empowered out-groups may diminish or augment hostility towards out-group members. In line with *contact* theory, exchanges with economically empowered out-groups may promote inter-group understanding by fostering perceptions of out-group members as economic contributors to local communities. In contrast, in accord with *threat* theory, proximity to economically empowered out-groups may engender greater out-group animosity by spurring competition for local economic control. Moreover, beyond influencing dyadic relationships between groups, experiences with one economically successful out-group (i.e., a *reference group*) may impact an individual’s understanding of ethno-racial hierarchies, more generally; thus, entrenching or destabilizing attitudes towards other ethno-racial out-groups as well. In particular, we speculate that whites’ attitudes towards blacks may be influenced by their economic exchanges with African Americans as well as their contact with economically empowered Hispanics and Asians.

This paper therefore explores how *economic* interactions shape out-group attitudes. Using a novel data set, we find that blacks, Latinos, whites, and Asians respond differently to contexts of out-group economic empowerment. African Americans and Latinos respond according to the *contact* hypothesis, adopting more positive out-group attitudes as the share of Hispanic and black owned businesses rises, respectively. In contrast, whites respond according to the *threat* and *reference group* hypotheses, becoming more antagonistic towards out-groups as the proportion of businesses owned by out-groups increases. There is some indication that Asians react similarly to whites, but the results for Asians fail to pass standard tests of statistical significance. Finally, we demonstrate that the relationship between out-

group business ownership and ethno-racial attitudes rivals but is in the opposite direction of that between residential proximity and out-group attitudes.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. We begin by outlining previous research on the influence of inter-group contact and exploring why the focus on residential effects is limiting. We then investigate how economic exchanges with businesses owned by out-groups provides a new lens with which to study out-group attitudes. We present three hypotheses regarding the relationship between out-group economic empowerment and ethno-racial attitudes: the *contact*, *threat* and *reference group* hypotheses. Next, we describe our novel data set, which takes advantage of data on the racial and ethnic composition of business ownership from the U.S. Census; to our knowledge, we are the first political science paper to use these data. Then, we present our results, which illustrate strikingly different patterns between whites and both blacks and Latinos. Finally, we conclude by discussing our results and their implications for future research and prospects for inter-racial and ethnic coalitions.

## 4.1 Inter-group (Residential) Contact and Out-Group Attitudes

The debate surrounding contact theory represents perhaps one of the most long-standing and robust discussions in scholarship on racial and ethnic politics. In particular, two strands of research disagree over whether inter-racial and ethnic group interactions engender more positive or negative attitudes towards out-group members.

According to contact theory (Allport, 1954), contact with an out-group produces more harmonious inter-group relations. By promoting inter-group interaction and communication, cross-group encounters provide direct experiences with out-group members that dispel stereotypes and prejudice and foster understanding and cooperation. On the contrary, threat theory (Key, 1949; Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996) suggests that perceptions of material self-interest and racial threat contribute to inter-group antagonism



when an in-group comes into contact with an out-group. In-group members worry that the out-group will compete with them for scarce economic, social and political goods and threaten their societal position more broadly.

Most empirical assessments of inter-group contact have focused on residential contact with out-group members (e.g., Quillian, 1996; Taylor, 1998; Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Gay, 2006; Ha, 2010; Hopkins, 2010). In particular, studies examine how the racial and ethnic composition of residents in individuals' surroundings – e.g., their census block, county, metropolitan area of residence – impacts out-group attitudes. While earlier research suggests that out-group hostility intensifies as the share of out-group residents increases (Quillian, 1996; Taylor, 1998), recent scholarship indicates a more complicated relationship between shared residence and out-group attitudes. The effect of residential encounters on out-group prejudice, perceptions of inter-group competition, and support for policies that benefit out-group members depends on a variety of factors, including the geographic unit of analysis, the ethno-racial groups under study, and the socioeconomic composition of residents (Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Gay, 2006; Ha, 2010). Despite disagreement on the precise consequences of inter-group residential contact, previous scholarship confirms the centrality of inter-group proximity in determining out-group attitudes.

## 4.2 Beyond Shared Residence

The above studies of inter-group contact are limited by their emphasis on residential integration. There are both empirical and theoretical reasons why this narrow focus might constrain our understanding of the relationship between inter-group contact and ethno-racial attitudes.

By only exploring residential encounters, previous research neglects the empirical reality that individuals encounter out-group members in more than just their neighborhoods. This

is particularly relevant given patterns of ethno-racial residential segregation. Although black segregation is on the decline (Logan and Stults, 2011; Glaeser and Vigdor, 2012), the residential isolation of racial and ethnic minority groups remains remarkably high. Across the nation's 367 metropolitan areas, the average white resides in a neighborhood that is 75% white, 8% black, 11% Hispanic, and 5% Asian. In contrast, the typical black neighborhood is 45% black, 35% white, 15% Hispanic and 4% Asian; the average Hispanic lives in an area that is 46% Hispanic, 35% white, 11% black and 7% Asian; and the typical Asian lives in a community that is 22% Asian, 49% white, 9% black, and 19% Hispanic (Logan and Stults, 2011). While these trends certainly constitute improvements in residential integration from the 1960s and 1970s, they suggest that Americans continue to reside in highly segregated communities.

Given high levels of residential segregation, scholarship that relies only on residential interactions may understate the extent to which individuals encounter members of a different race or ethnicity. While inter-racial and ethnic residential contact may be limited for many Americans, non-residential contexts may provide additional opportunities for inter-group connections. Indeed, our data reveal that individuals are more likely to live in communities with a greater density of Asian owned businesses than Asian residents. This suggests that contact with Asians is seemingly more apt to occur via economic exchanges than residential interactions.

Theoretically, an emphasis on residential interactions ignores the possibility that inter-group contact in other domains may have distinct impacts on out-group attitudes. These additional contexts include, for example, political and bureaucratic institutions (e.g., Sonenshein, 1993; Mollenkopf, 1997; Frasure and Jones-Correa, 2010; Marrow, 2011) as well as economic interactions (e.g., Sonenshein, 2001; Kim, 2003). Although previous research has identified theoretical reasons why contexts outside the residential might matter, these studies have important methodological limitations that leave room for a more systematic exploration of the effects of non-residential contact on inter-group attitudes. First, many of

these works have centered on case studies and/or in-depth ethnographic research. Moreover, much of this scholarship has focused on inter-group dynamics in New York and Los Angeles; the nation's two largest cities (but see, e.g., Frasure and Jones-Correa, 2010; Marrow, 2011). While these works provide useful insights into how demographic changes may transform inter-group relationships across a variety of settings, their research design precludes generalizing their findings to contexts more broadly across the country.

In this paper, we focus on one alternative and particularly visible context of inter-group interaction: economic exchanges with businesses owned by out-group members. This emphasis has both theoretical and methodological advantages. In the next section, we outline why a focus on these economic interactions enriches our understanding of the influence of inter-group contact on attitudes towards ethno-racial out-groups. Using these theoretical insights, we generate a unique set of empirical expectations regarding the relationship between out-group business ownership and out-group attitudes. Subsequently, we explore the novel data set that allows us to systematically assess our theoretical predictions in a way that is generalizable.

### **4.3 A New Lens: Economic Empowerment**

Economic exchanges with businesses owned by out-groups have significant potential to influence out-group attitudes. They not only facilitate contact with out-group members; they also convey information regarding the ethno-racial distribution of economic power. In turn, this contact with economically empowered groups may augment or diminish hostility towards out-group members.

Like an integrated residential context, economic exchanges with businesses owned by out-groups enable inter-group contact. When an individual enters an establishment owned by an out-group, she is likely to encounter not only an owner of a different race or ethnicity, but also employees belonging to that out-group. Indeed, research on workplace segregation and

ethnic enclaves suggests that a Korean-owned store, for example, will be apt to hire Korean employees (Fratoe, 1988; Waldinger et al., 1990; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993; Hellerstein and Neumark, 2008; Hellerstein, McInerney and Neumark, 2008)(but see, Becker, 1980).<sup>1</sup> Simply put, proximity to businesses owned by out-groups increases the likelihood of contact with that out-group.

Second, and more importantly, interactions with businesses owned by out-groups are particularly relevant given the distinctiveness of contacts defined by economic versus residential exchanges. While residential proximity captures various forms of inter-group contact – from social to economic relationships between groups – proximity to businesses owned by out-groups specifically taps dynamics that emerge in the course of economic transactions. For example, shared neighborhoods might indicate that individuals of different ethno-racial backgrounds share a friendship network or participate in the same voluntary associations; it may also indicate that ethno-racial groups compete for the same economic resources, including job opportunities. In contrast, out-group business ownership more narrowly targets inter-group interactions that occur via economic institutions, such as hiring decisions and the sale of goods.

More than residential encounters, these economic experiences have significant potential to convey the ethno-racial distribution of local economic power. As suggested by other work (Gay, 2006), economic institutions can provide clear signals regarding the allocation of socioeconomic resources in a neighborhood: whether there are *tacquerias* or Asian grocery stores depends on which residents are economically able to open and sustain these institutions. More generally, business ownership constitutes a tangible indicator of the ethno-racial locus of economic power in a community. It identifies both who (1) controls the type, production, and sale of local economic goods and services *and* (2) is responsible for the creation of economic opportunities and growth in an area. Arguably, this represents the strongest available embodiment of economic power held by a group.

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<sup>1</sup>Becker (1980) suggests that the level of segregation will vary by workplace.

### 4.3.1 Hypotheses

How might contact with economically empowered out-groups influence out-group attitudes? We have three hypotheses regarding the relationship between economic exchanges with businesses owned by out-groups and out-group attitudes. They suggest that out-group economic empowerment may heighten or dampen animosity towards out-groups.<sup>2</sup>

**Hypothesis 1 (Threat):** *Higher proportions of businesses owned by an out-group will engender more hostile attitudes towards that out-group.* This hypothesis is rooted in previous scholarship on threat theory. As in the case of residentially-provoked threat, higher levels of out-group business ownership might spur competition for control over local economic resources and consequent greater out-group animosity. Indeed, Kim's (2003) in-depth case study of the Red Apple boycott in New York City reveals that blacks' protest of Korean grocers was, in part, due to Korean control over the neighborhood economic apparatus in an otherwise predominantly African American community. Similarly, Sonenshein (2001) suggests that, despite their consonant political ideologies, Jews and Hispanics in Los Angeles have failed to form a political coalition partly because Jews are more likely to wield economic power as employers than Hispanics.

Research on the influence of inter-group contact has not been uniformly negative, however. As noted above, contact theory suggests that inter-group interactions can promote out-group affinity. Exchanges with economically empowered out-groups may lead individuals to perceive racial and ethnic out-groups as contributing to rather than threatening the vitality of local communities. Viewing out-group members as critical economic backbones of the neighborhood, individuals may adopt out-group attitudes that promote inter-group understanding.<sup>3</sup> We therefore have a second prediction, **Hypothesis 2 (Contact):** *Higher*

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<sup>2</sup>We are not the first to suggest that contact with economically (dis)advantaged groups is significant in defining out-group perceptions (e.g., Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000; Gay, 2006). However, other works examine the socioeconomic composition of neighborhood residents. Instead, we focus on control over local businesses, which we have argued is both empirically and theoretically distinct from the focus in prior works.

<sup>3</sup>Of course, as different types of businesses, e.g., manufacturing versus food services, vary in the scope of

*proportions of business owned by an out-group will spur more positive attitudes towards that out-group.*

The hypotheses above center on interactions between two ethno-racial groups – that is, a single in-group’s attitudes towards one out-group. While most existing works do focus on dyadic relationships, the emphasis on ethno-racial binaries may overlook the more complex effects that exposure to an out-group may have on racial and ethnic hierarchies (e.g., Hochschild, Weaver and Burch, 2012). Indeed, a newer strand of research highlights the ways that white Americans’ relationship to one out-group can be changed (Marrow, 2011) or solidified (Kim, 1999) by the emergence of a second out-group. Marrow (2011) suggests that rising Hispanic immigration in the American Southeast has complicated the relationship between whites, Hispanics, and blacks. A new ethno-racial group, however, does not always destabilize existing hierarchies: Kim (1999) contends that whites “triangulate” Asian Americans within the context of an entrenched black-white binary. By simultaneously praising Asians relative to blacks and excluding Asians from full civic incorporation, whites ensure that they maintain their power over both blacks and Asians.

Thus, moving beyond inter-group dyads, it is possible that proximity to businesses owned by out-groups could alter broad societal perceptions of America’s ethno-racial hierarchy. Since scholarship on this topic has focused on the black-white binary and its accommodation of other ethno-racial groups, we center our attention there as well in deriving our final prediction, **Hypothesis 3 (Reference Group)**, which has two parts.

**Hypothesis 3A:** *Higher proportions of business ownership by Hispanics and Asians will entrench whites’ attitudes towards blacks, leading to greater white antagonism towards blacks.* The logic underlying this prediction stems from what is popularly termed the “model minority effect.” When whites observe Hispanics and Asians economically succeeding as

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resources they provide to communities, it may be that the industry of a business conditions the positive effect of contact with out-group business ownership. Nevertheless, as all businesses contribute to the economic opportunities and growth of an area, we speculate that a positive contact effect is possible for any business regardless of its industrial sector.

entrepreneurial business owners, it may reinforce their perception that opportunities for minority advancement are plentiful and that a group’s success or failure is based solely on individual effort. Consequently, whites might valorize the accomplishments of Hispanics and Asians relative to blacks and become less sympathetic towards black disadvantage. This could, in turn, lead whites to adopt more negative attitudes towards African Americans.

On the other hand, contact with a second (or third) out-group might also undermine, rather than entrench, whites’ attitudes towards blacks. The economic success of Hispanics and Asians could encourage whites to reconceptualize all non-white groups. Seeing non-whites economically contribute to society might spur whites to improve their perceptions of minorities more generally, including those with respect to African Americans. This leads us to **Hypothesis 3B**: *Higher proportions of business ownership by Hispanics and Asians will destabilize whites’ attitudes towards blacks, leading to less white antagonism towards blacks.*

## 4.4 Data

We use a variety of data sets to test our propositions: the 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO), the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES), and the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census (Census). To link our contextual data to survey respondents, we rely on county-level geocodes. Geographically-linked effects can theoretically occur at any level of analysis and have been documented at levels ranging from small neighborhoods to counties and states (Alesina, Glaeser and Sacerdote, 2001; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Hero and Preuhs, 2007; Hopkins, 2010). Because our causal processes are hypothesized to occur via local interactions, we choose the smallest geographic area common to the 2010 CCES, 2007 SBO and 2000 Census: the county.

### 4.4.1 Out-Group Economic Empowerment

In order to measure out-group economic empowerment, we obtain county-level data on the racial and ethnic composition of business ownership from the 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO).<sup>4</sup> Conducted by the U.S. Census every five years, the SBO compiles information on the economic and demographic characteristics of businesses and their owners by surveying a large random sample of U.S. businesses. It defines business ownership as owning a majority (i.e., fifty-one percent or more) of the equity, interest or stock in a business and reports the race and ethnicity of businesses ownership based on race and ethnicity self-reports.<sup>5</sup> Using the SBO, we construct three county-level measures of the racial and ethnic composition of business ownership: the proportion of businesses that are black owned, the proportion of businesses that are Hispanic owned, and the proportion of businesses that are Asian owned.

### 4.4.2 Measuring Individual-Level Out-Group Attitudes

We link our measures of out-group business ownership to individual-level data from the 2010 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES). The CCES is a U.S. nationwide survey of more than 50,000 respondents capturing variation across a wide variety of demographic groups and geographic areas. The large samples in the CCES allow us to extend our study beyond whites, and explore out-group attitudes among blacks, Latinos, and Asians; traditional surveys often lack sufficient numbers for comparative analyses across different racial and ethnic groups. Moreover, the geographic scope of the CCES enables us to examine inter-group dynamics across multiple geographies. As most previous studies of contextual

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<sup>4</sup>The 2007 SBO data is representative at the county-level and based on 1.4 million survey responses to the 2007 SBO questionnaire.

<sup>5</sup>As in the U.S. Decennial Census, the SBO treats race and ethnicity as separate concepts and includes separate questions regarding the race and a ethnicity of each business owner. However, the SBO does not report business ownership by race-ethnicity categories (e.g., non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic Black). Instead, businesses owned by one ethnicity may be of any race and businesses owned by one race may be of any ethnicity. Moreover, the SBO allows each owner the option of selecting more than one race category. When tabulating the race of business owners, it includes owners in each race category selected.



effects on ethno-racial attitudes have focused on a small number of large metropolitan areas, our approach allows for a more representative understanding of how inter-group contact influences out-group attitudes.

Using the CCES, we construct three measures to assess out-group ethno-racial attitudes: one capturing views towards Latinos and Asians and two evaluating perceptions of African Americans. For attitudes towards Latinos and Asians, we average binary responses to three immigration policy issues.<sup>6</sup> While we ideally would have used questions explicitly focused on these two groups, the CCES unfortunately does not contain any questions that directly ask about perceptions of Latinos and Asians. Given the racialization of immigration policy and its link to Latino and Asian communities in the media and political discourse (e.g., Hopkins, 2010; Chavez, 2001), we believe that immigration policy attitudes roughly tap sentiments towards Latinos and Asians.

The three questions composing our anti-immigrant summary score explore support for: (1) granting legal status to illegal immigrants who have held jobs and paid taxes for at least three years and not been convicted of any felony crimes; (2) increasing the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border; and (3) allowing police to question anyone they think may be in the country illegally. The four-point score ranges from zero to one with higher scores indicating greater anti-immigrant sentiment.<sup>7</sup>

With its focus on illegal immigration, US-Mexican border control, and policies designed to manage illegal immigration in states bordering Mexico, our measure of immigration policy attitudes is clearly more closely linked with attitudes towards Latinos. Our results exploring attitudes towards Asians are therefore likely to feature less precise estimates, and should be interpreted with some caution. Nonetheless, we argue that our measure at a minimum

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<sup>6</sup>In constructing this summary score, rather than case-wise deleting respondents with missing data on any of the immigration policy items, we calculate averages using all non-missing responses. Our results reported below are largely consistent when we conduct separate analyses of responses to each immigration policy item.

<sup>7</sup>There were two other questions that measured immigration policy attitudes in the 2010 CCES. We do not include them in our analysis because they were only asked of a small subset of respondents.

elicits consideration of immigrant groups in general, and in communities with high rates of Asian business ownership, views on immigration should more closely reflect attitudes towards Asians. Thus, our analysis of immigration attitudes should be able to capture the effects of out-group business ownership on attitudes towards Asians.

To assess attitudes towards African Americans, we rely on two measures. The first evaluates opposition to affirmative action when companies have a history of discriminating against blacks using a four-point scale that ranges from strongly support to strongly oppose.<sup>8</sup> Our second measure provides a more general sense of subjects' negative affect towards African Americans. It is constructed by averaging responses to two questions that are commonly used to assess anti-black racial resentment.<sup>9,10</sup> The nine-point score ranges from one to five with higher values indicating greater resentment of blacks.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4.4.3 Additional Contextual Demographics

The data from the SBO and CCES are supplemented with county-level demographic data from the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census. Census data on the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic composition of county residents allows us to control for contextual conditions beyond the racial and ethnic composition of business ownership that may moderate the relationship

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<sup>8</sup>In 2010, the CCES asked, "Some people think that if a company has a history of discriminating against blacks when making hiring decisions, then they should be required to have an affirmative action program that gives blacks preference in hiring. What do you think? Should companies that have discriminated against blacks have to have an affirmative action program?"

<sup>9</sup>The questions asked how strongly, on a five point scale, respondents agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: (1) "The Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors." (2) "Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class."

<sup>10</sup>In constructing this summary score, when there was missing data on either of the racial resentment items, rather than employing case-wise deletion, we used subjects' non-missing response. Our results reported below are largely consistent when each racial resentment item is analyzed separately.

<sup>11</sup>In the tables below, the sample sizes for our analyses of support for affirmative action are larger than those for our assessments of anti-black racial resentment because the affirmative action item was asked in the pre-election wave of the CCES and the racial resentment items were asked in the post-election wave of the study.

between out-group attitudes and out-group economic empowerment. Moreover, it allows us to compare the magnitude and direction of effects of out-group business ownership and residential proximity.

#### 4.4.4 Links between Variables

Before delving into our statistical models, we descriptively explore relationships between our novel measure of business ownership and other contextual and demographic measures. The CCES' 52,510 respondents hail from 2,655 counties, with black, Latino, Asian and white respondents from 852, 651, 234, and 2,558 unique counties, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 4.1 displays the distributions of our measures of economic empowerment for respondents (solid line) and unique counties (dotted line). The CCES data clearly overrepresents respondents from counties with higher proportions of non-white business ownership: the average share of black, Hispanic and Asian owned businesses among respondents consistently exceeds that for counties. Among respondents, the mean percent black, Hispanic and Asian owned businesses are 7.7%, 8.1%, and 5.7%, respectively; among counties, African Americans, Hispanics and Asians own, on average, 4%, 3%, and 1.4%, respectively, of businesses. For our purposes, this oversample of counties with larger proportions of minority business ownership is useful, providing us with adequate data on counties where economically empowered blacks, Hispanics and Asians are more common.

Even with the oversample of respondents from certain counties, the CCES still provides substantial data on respondents from regions across the country as well as areas with various rates of minority business ownership. This is evident in Figure 4.2, which displays three U.S. maps showing the geographic distribution of our measures of black, Hispanic and Asian business ownership.<sup>13</sup> As we might expect, rates of business ownership vary across geographic regions: the share of black owned businesses is highest in the south; the share of Hispanic

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<sup>12</sup>The CCES data features 6,411 black, 4,033 Hispanic, 668 Asian and 41,388 white respondents.

<sup>13</sup>Non-shaded counties – i.e., those in white – represent areas for which we lack data.

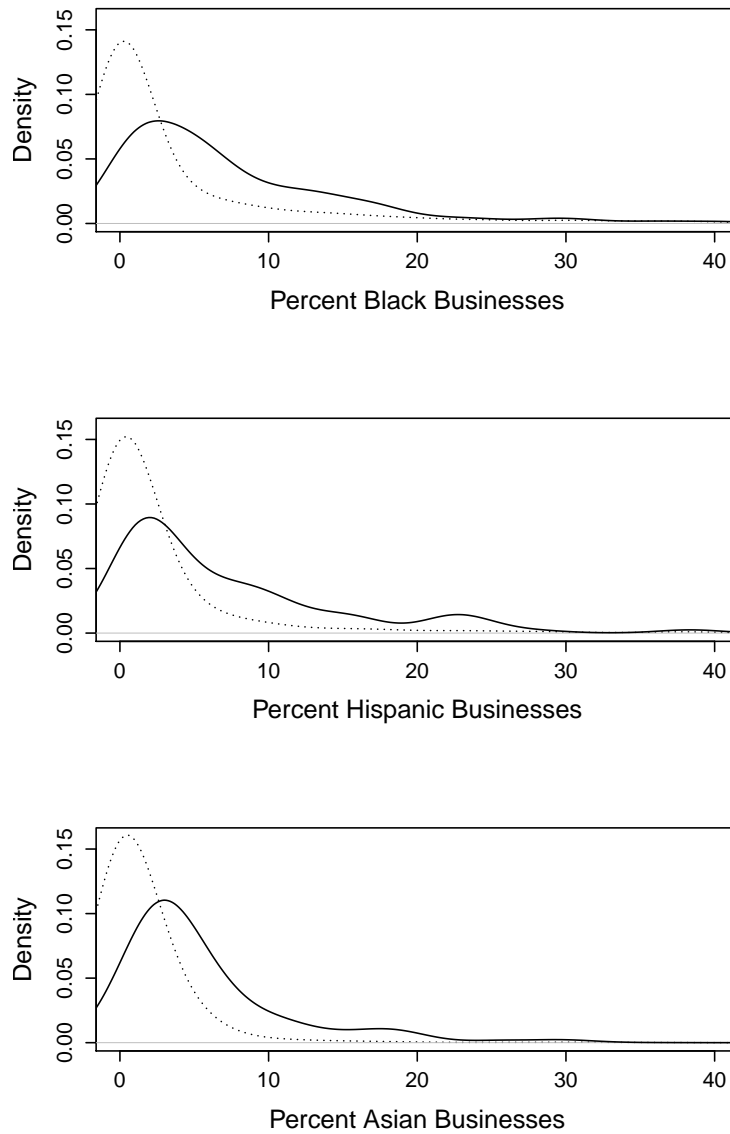


Figure 4.1: Distributions of County-Level Percent Black, Hispanic and Asian Business Ownership among CCES Respondents (Solid Line) and Counties (Dotted Line)

owned businesses is highest in the west; and the share of Asian owned businesses is highest in the west and northeast.

The racial and ethnic composition of business ownership is also related to respondent race and ethnicity. The share of black businesses is, on average, 8.7 percentage points higher for African American respondents than non-black respondents. Similarly, compared to non-Latinos, Latinos in the CCES tend to live in communities where the proportion of Hispanic businesses is 12 percentage points higher; and compared to non-Asians, Asians in the CCES tend to reside in counties where the proportion of Asian businesses is 7.9 percentage points higher. Accordingly, white respondents reside in counties where rates of minority business ownership are lower than where non-white respondents live. On average, the percent black, Hispanic and Asian business ownership are, respectively, 5.7, 5.9, and 2.6 percentage points lower for white than non-white respondents.

More generally, rates of minority business ownership are correlated with the racial and ethnic composition of residents in counties.<sup>14</sup> Black, Hispanic, and Asian business ownership are more common in areas where these groups comprise a larger share of the population.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, areas with more white residents have fewer minority owned businesses.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Rates of minority business ownership are also positively correlated with the county-level percent urban (Black business ownership: Pearson  $r = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Hispanic business ownership: Pearson  $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Asian business ownership: Pearson  $r = 0.5$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and population density (Black business ownership: Pearson  $r = 0.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Hispanic business ownership: Pearson  $r = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Asian business ownership: Pearson  $r = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Correlations between rates of minority business ownership and county socioeconomic conditions vary across ethno-racial groups. While black and Hispanic owned businesses are more common in lower socioeconomic status areas, Asian business ownership is higher in areas with less poverty and more educated residents (Black business ownership and county percent in poverty: Pearson  $r = 0.31$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Hispanic business ownership and county percent in poverty: Pearson  $r = 0.24$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Asian business ownership and county percent in poverty: Pearson  $r = -0.13$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Black business ownership and county percent high school educated: Pearson  $r = -0.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Hispanic business ownership and county percent high school educated: Pearson  $r = -0.22$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Asian business ownership and county percent high school educated: Pearson  $r = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>15</sup>Black business ownership and population share: Pearson  $r = 0.92$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Hispanic business ownership and population share: Pearson  $r = 0.95$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Asian business ownership and population share: Pearson  $r = 0.92$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

<sup>16</sup>Black business ownership and white population share: Pearson  $r = -0.64$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Hispanic business ownership and white population share: Pearson  $r = -0.56$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; Asian business ownership and white population share: Pearson  $r = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

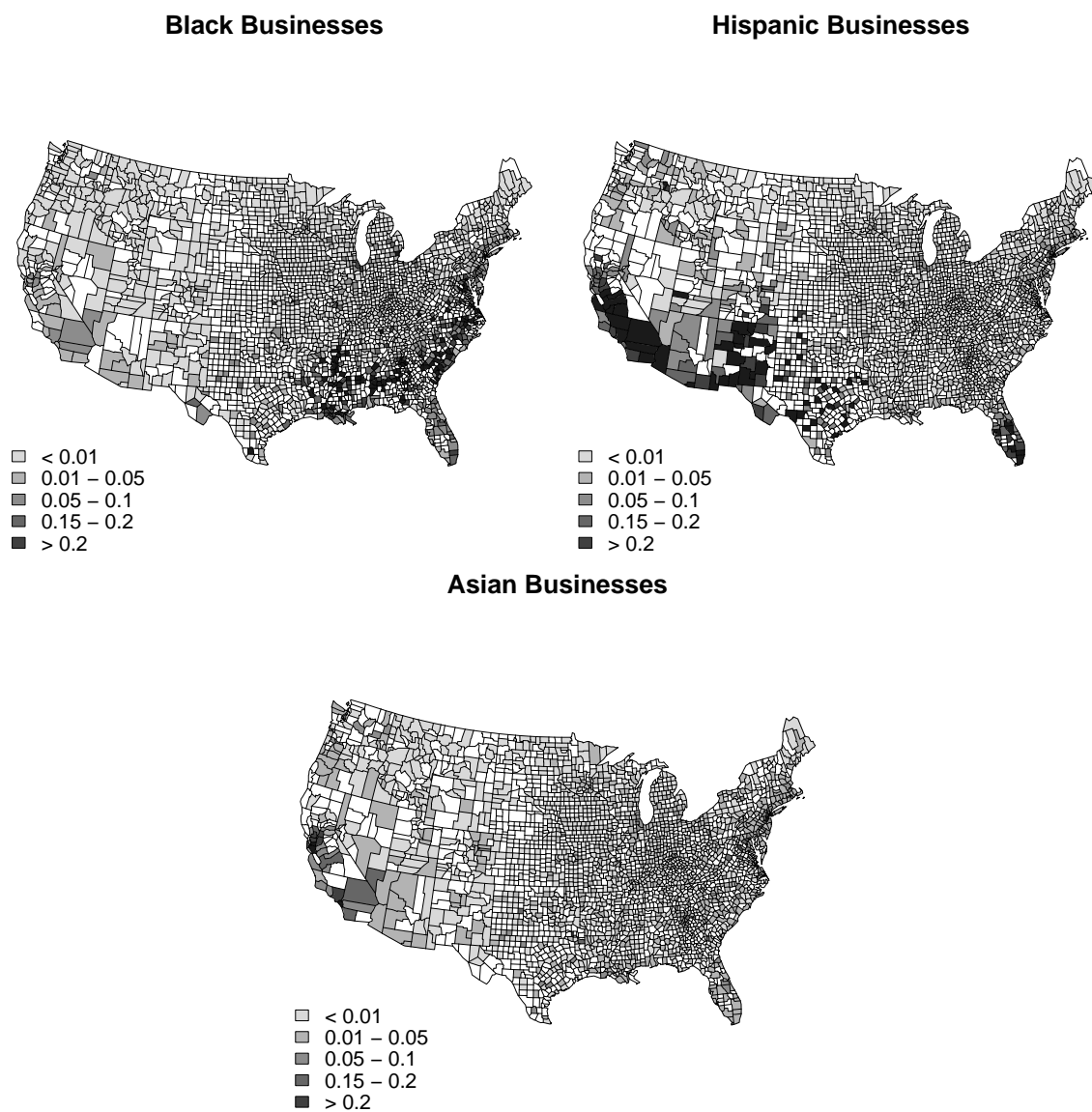


Figure 4.2: Proportion of Businesses Owned by Blacks, Hispanics and Asians in CCES Counties

Despite strong correlations between the racial and ethnic composition of business ownership and residents, there is not a perfect correspondence between the two. The likelihood of encountering a black, Hispanic, or Asian resident is not the same as the probability of having an economic exchange with a business owned by these groups. Individuals, regardless of race, live in counties with larger shares of black and Hispanic residents than businesses and smaller proportions of Asian residents than businesses (Figure 4.3). This suggests that while residential encounters are more common than economic exchanges with African Americans and Hispanics, commercial transactions are more likely than neighborhood interactions with Asians. Population share alone does not adequately account for the extent of inter-group contact; our novel measure of business ownership indeed captures an empirically distinct form of inter-group contact.

## 4.5 Results

In this section, we present our results by first evaluating H1 and H2. Given our interest in how out-group economic empowerment impacts out-group attitudes, we focus on (1) the effects of Hispanic and Asian business ownership on black and white immigration policy attitudes and (2) the influence of black business ownership on Latino, Asian, and white opposition to affirmative action and resentment of blacks. We then evaluate H3, considering whether and how whites' perceptions of African Americans are influenced by contact with other racial and ethnic minority groups.<sup>17</sup> Finally, we compare the effects of out-group contact via economic exchanges and residential encounters.

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<sup>17</sup>The broad principle underlying H3 – i.e., that out-group attitudes are informed by economic experiences with reference groups – may apply to inter-group dynamics beyond the black-white binary as well. Thus, although we focus our attention on how Hispanic and Asian business ownership influences white attitudes towards African Americans, we have analyzed how proximity to businesses owned by minority reference groups influences black and white immigration policy attitudes as well as Latino and Asian anti-black attitudes. Results from these assessments are summarized in the footnotes below. Overall, they suggest that business ownership by reference groups is not relevant to black and white immigration policy attitudes or to Asian attitudes towards African Americans; however, business ownership by non-black minorities does appear to be relevant in determining Latino anti-black attitudes.

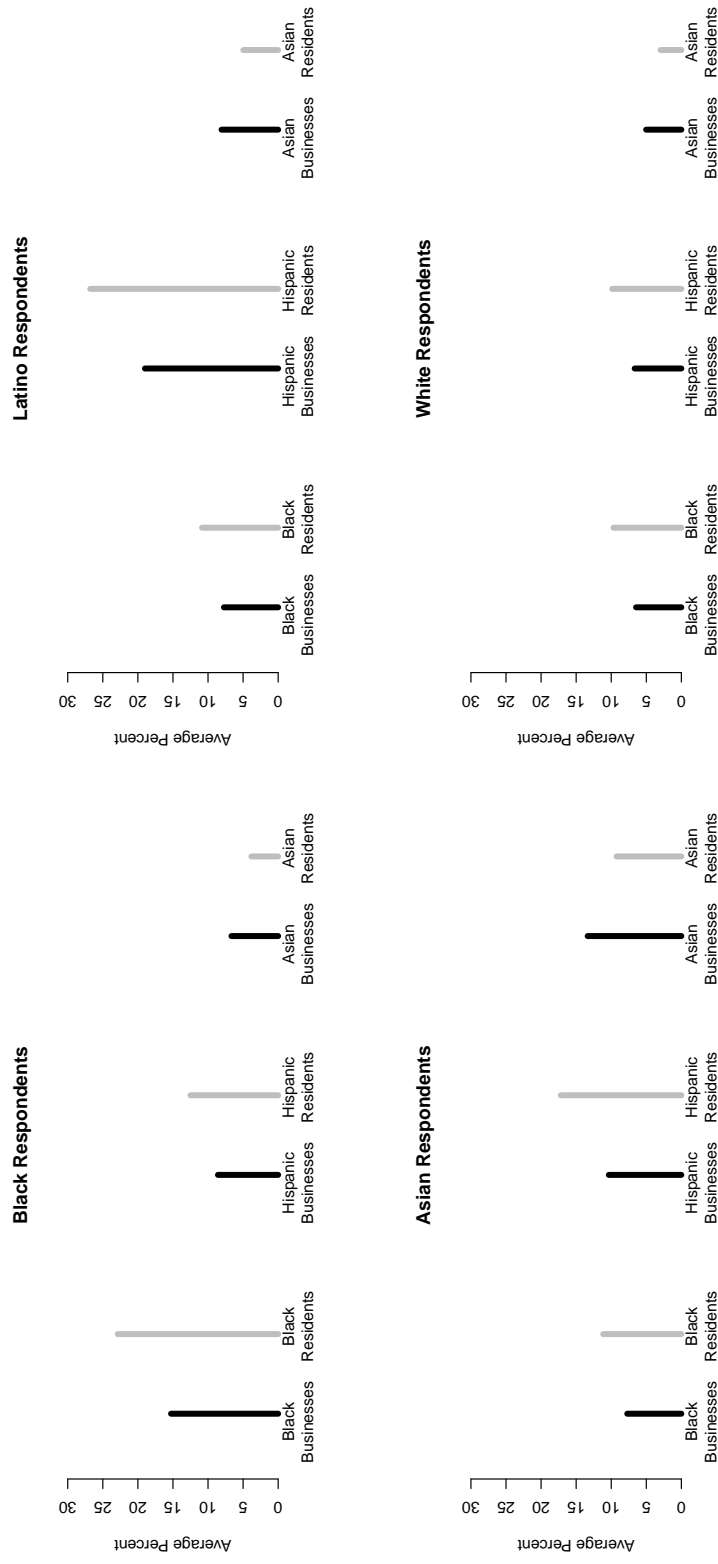


Figure 4.3: Average Percent Black, Hispanic and Asian Owned Businesses and Residents by Respondent Race and Ethnicity



### 4.5.1 Black and White Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Hispanic and Asian Business Ownership

In order to evaluate the effects of out-group business ownership on black and white attitudes towards Latinos and Asians, we regress our summary anti-immigrant score on our county-level measures of Hispanic and Asian business ownership. We model black and white attitudes separately using linear regression and controls for contextual and individual demographic variables that may influence the presence of Hispanic and Asian owned businesses as well as out-group ethno-racial attitudes.<sup>18</sup>

Column 1 of Table 4.1 presents the results from the model predicting blacks' anti-immigrant policy score. Although black attitudes on immigration do not differ significantly based on the proportion of businesses owned by Asians, African Americans residing in counties with larger percentages of Hispanic owned businesses are less anti-immigrant. The negative and statistically significant coefficient on the proportion Hispanic businesses indicates that, as the share of businesses owned by Hispanics increases, anti-immigrant policy sentiment among blacks decreases. The substantive magnitude of this relationship is displayed in Figure 4.4. It plots predicted anti-immigrant scores for blacks by the proportion of businesses owned by Hispanics.<sup>19</sup> All else equal, blacks residing in a community where 20% of businesses are owned by Hispanics are 24% less anti-immigrant than their counterparts living in counties with no Hispanic owned businesses. These results present strong support for H2: among blacks, increases in out-group business ownership reduce out-group hostility.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Our results are largely consistent when we model black and white attitudes using ordered probit regression and controls for partisan identification, political ideology, the socioeconomic status of Hispanic and Asian residents (i.e., county-level proportion of Hispanic and Asian residents that is high school educated), geographic region, county-level percent urban, and county-level population density.

<sup>19</sup>Predictions and associated 95% confidence intervals are derived from linear regression estimates reported in column 1 of Table 4.1, holding all other independent variables constant at their median values. A rug has been added to the figure to indicate the observed values for the percent Hispanic owned businesses within the 0% to 20% range. Roughly 2.3% of all unique counties in the data have rates of Hispanic business ownership that equal or exceed 20%.

<sup>20</sup>When the model in column 1 of Table 4.1 is re-estimated including our measures of black business ownership and proximity to black residents, our results remain the same: only the coefficients for proportion

Table 4.1: Predicting Anti-Immigrant Attitudes among Blacks and Whites

	Blacks	Whites
	Anti-Immigrant Score	Anti-Immigrant Score
(Intercept)	3.23*** (0.79)	4.86*** (0.35)
Prop. Asian Businesses	-0.25 (0.29)	1.02*** (0.14)
Prop. Asian Residents	-0.19 (0.39)	-1.79*** (0.18)
Prop. Hispanic Businesses	-0.51*** (0.12)	0.04 (0.06)
Prop. Hispanic Residents	0.47*** (0.09)	-0.05 (0.05)
Prop. HS Educated	-0.25* (0.15)	-0.40*** (0.06)
Prop. Below Poverty	-0.56*** (0.16)	-0.61*** (0.08)
Income	0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)
Education	-0.02*** (0.00)	-0.05*** (0.00)
Unemployed	0.01 (0.02)	0.02** (0.01)
Birthyear	0.00*** (0.00)	0.00*** (0.00)
Female	-0.02** (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.00)
Homeowner	0.00 (0.01)	0.06*** (0.01)
Length of Residence	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Num. obs.	4947	25943

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

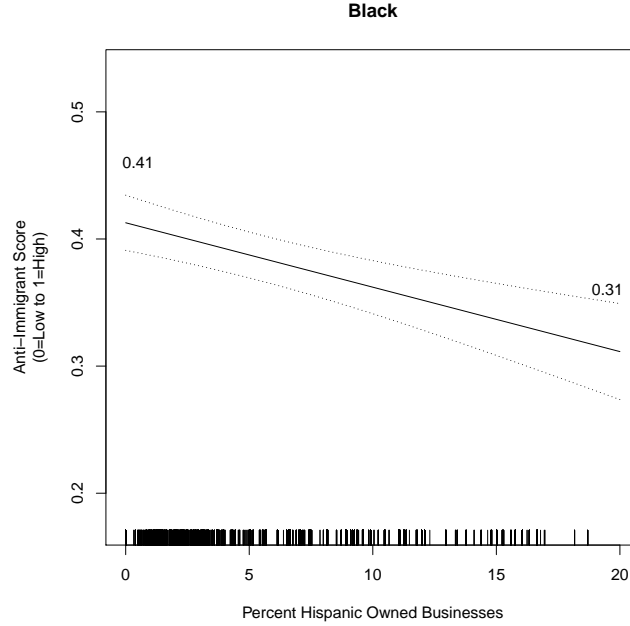


Figure 4.4: Predicted Anti-Immigrant Score for Blacks

In contrast, the results from our model predicting whites' attitudes on immigration (column 2 of Table 4.1) suggest that whites respond negatively to out-group economic empowerment. While the proportion of businesses owned by Hispanics does not appear to have a significant effect on white attitudes on immigration, Asian business ownership has a powerful and positive impact on anti-immigrant attitudes.<sup>21</sup> Whites who reside in counties with a larger share of businesses owned by Asians hold more anti-immigrant policy attitudes than those living in areas with smaller percentages of Asian businesses. The strength of this relationship is shown in Figure 4.5, which plots predicted anti-immigrant scores for whites at various percentages of Asian owned businesses.<sup>22</sup> With an anti-immigrant score of 0.82,

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Hispanic businesses and residents are statistically significant and the signs on these coefficients remain negative and positive, respectively.

<sup>21</sup>When the model in column 2 of Table 4.1 is re-estimated including measures of black business ownership and proximity to black residents, this result is replicated. The only measure of out-group business ownership that is statistically significant is for Asian businesses. Asian business ownership increases white anti-immigrant sentiment.

<sup>22</sup>Predictions and associated 95% confidence intervals are derived from linear regression estimates reported in column 2 of Table 4.1, holding all other independent variables constant at their median values. A rug has been added to the figure to indicate the observed values for the percent Asian owned businesses within the

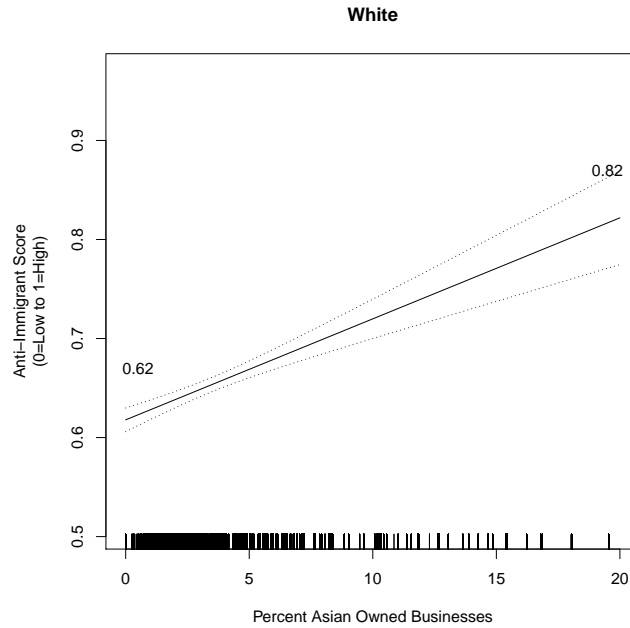


Figure 4.5: Predicted Anti-Immigrant Score for Whites

whites residing in counties where 20% of businesses are owned by Asians are about 32% more anti-immigrant than whites in counties without any businesses owned by Asians.

These results illustrate striking differences in how African Americans and whites respond to contact with economically empowered out-groups. While black attitudes reflect H2 – i.e., that inter-group contact promotes out-group understanding – white attitudes reflect H1 – i.e., that inter-group contact heightens out-group hostility. Moreover, our findings also indicate that different out-groups are relevant to African Americans’ and whites’ immigration policy attitudes. While blacks’ attitudes are driven by Hispanic business ownership, whites’ views are shaped by Asian economic empowerment.

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0% to 20% range. Roughly 0.3% of all unique counties in the data have rates of Asian business ownership that equal or exceed 20%.

### 4.5.2 Anti-Black Attitudes among Latinos, Asian and Whites and Black Business Ownership

Next, we turn our attention to the effects of out-group business ownership on Latino, Asian, and white attitudes towards African Americans. We regress opposition to affirmative action and black racial resentment on our county-level measures of black business ownership. Again, Latino, Asian and white attitudes are modeled separately using linear regression and controls for contextual and individual demographic variables that may influence the racial and ethnic composition of business ownership as well as out-group ethno-racial attitudes.<sup>23</sup>

Columns 1 and 2 of Table 4.2 present the results from the models predicting Latinos' attitudes towards blacks. Latino opposition to affirmative action is negatively and significantly related to the percent black owned businesses. The strength of this relationship is visible in Figure 4.6, which plots predicted opposition to affirmative action among Latinos by the share of businesses owned by African Americans.<sup>24</sup> A 20 percentage point increase in the county-level proportion of black owned businesses decreases Latino opposition to affirmative action programs by 0.37 points, or 15%. While Latinos are more supportive of black policy interests as the share of black owned businesses increases, Latino resentment of blacks is not significantly related to the proportion of businesses owned by African Americans. However, the negative sign on the coefficient for proportion black businesses indicates that black resentment among Latinos is lower in areas with more black business ownership. Thus, like their African American counterparts, Latino responses to out-group empowerment are consistent with H2: when exposed to economically empowered blacks, Latinos exhibit

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<sup>23</sup>Our results are largely consistent when we model Latino, Asian and white anti-black attitudes using ordered probit regression and controls for partisan identification, political ideology, the socioeconomic status of black residents (i.e., county-level proportion of African American residents that is high school educated), geographic region, county-level percent urban, and county-level population density.

<sup>24</sup>Predictions and associated 95% confidence intervals are derived from linear regression estimates reported in Table 4.2 column 1, holding all other independent variables constant at their median values. A rug has been added to the figure to indicate the observed values for the percent black owned businesses within the 0% to 20% range. Roughly 4% of all unique counties in the data have rates of black business ownership that equal or exceed 20%.

Table 4.2: Predicting Opposition to Affirmative Action and Black Resentment among Latinos, Asians and Whites

	Latinos		Asians		Whites	
	Affirmative Action	Black Resentment	Affirmative Action	Black Resentment	Affirmative Action	Black Resentment
(Intercept)	13.17*** (2.81)	15.82*** (3.48)	12.80* (6.67)	24.60*** (8.08)	6.38*** (0.83)	6.58*** (1.14)
Prop. Black Businesses	-1.84*** (0.65)	-0.43 (0.80)	1.46 (1.67)	0.29 (2.19)	0.26 (0.22)	0.50 (0.31)
Prop. Black Residents	1.36*** (0.48)	0.63 (0.59)	-1.72 (1.14)	0.33 (1.48)	-0.05 (0.15)	-0.07 (0.21)
Prop. HS Educated	-0.72* (0.43)	-1.78*** (0.54)	-1.17 (1.05)	-1.76 (1.25)	-1.32*** (0.13)	-1.97*** (0.17)
Prop. Below Poverty	-1.32** (0.63)	-2.37*** (0.77)	-1.19 (1.51)	-4.54** (1.81)	-1.49*** (0.18)	-2.04*** (0.25)
Income	0.03*** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Education	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.11*** (0.00)	-0.20*** (0.01)
Unemployed	-0.04 (0.06)	0.06 (0.07)	0.21 (0.18)	-0.17 (0.24)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)
Birthyear	-0.01*** (0.00)	-0.01*** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.01** (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Female	-0.12*** (0.04)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.09)	0.12 (0.10)	-0.19*** (0.01)	-0.15*** (0.02)
Homeowner	0.16*** (0.04)	0.21*** (0.05)	-0.04 (0.10)	0.11 (0.12)	0.14*** (0.01)	0.20*** (0.02)
Length of Residence	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00** (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Num. obs.	3266	2528	502	444	29157	25277

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

less out-group hostility, particularly in the form of more support for policies that benefit the out-group, like affirmative action.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast, there is some evidence that Asians and whites respond to black business ownership in ways consistent with H1. Columns 3 through 6 of Table 4.2 present the results from the models predicting Asians' and whites' opposition to affirmative action and black resentment. Although neither measure of Asians' or whites' anti-black attitudes is significantly related to the share of businesses owned by African Americans, the signs on the coefficients for the proportion black businesses suggest that Asians and whites become more

<sup>25</sup>When the models in columns 1 and 2 of Table 4.2 are re-estimated including our measures of Hispanic and Asian business ownership and residential proximity, our central finding is the same: proximity to black businesses increases Latino support for affirmative action. There is also evidence that Asian business proximity increases Latino opposition to affirmative action and anti-black racial resentment and that Hispanic business proximity increases Latino resentment of blacks.

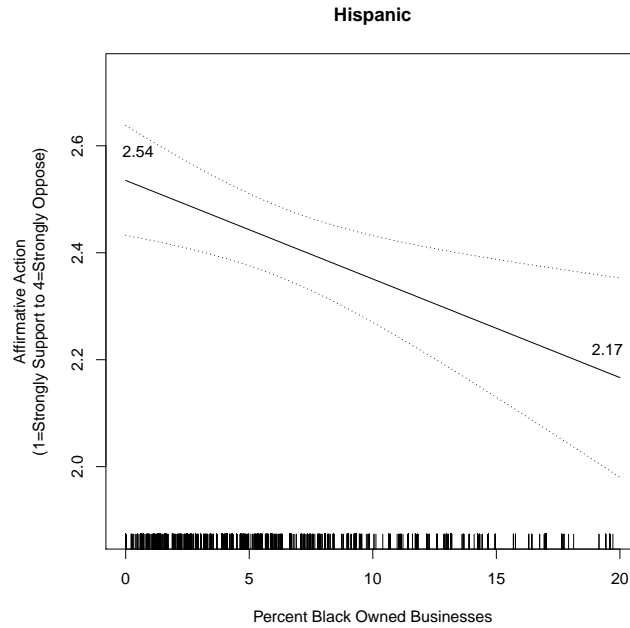


Figure 4.6: Predicted Opposition to Affirmative Action among Latinos

antagonistic towards African Americans as they become more economically empowered.<sup>26</sup> Opposition to affirmative action and black resentment increase among Asians and whites as blacks own a larger percentage of the businesses in a county.

Once again, then, there appear to be differences in how racial and ethnic groups respond to out-group economic empowerment. Latinos behave in conformity with H2, the contact hypothesis. Conversely, Asians and whites seem to respond according to H1, the threat hypothesis. Taken in concert with our immigration findings, these results indicate that economic exchanges with businesses owned by out-group members can enhance inter-group comity or augment out-group hostility depending on the ethno-racial groups under consideration.

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<sup>26</sup>When the models for Asians' anti-black attitudes in columns 3 and 4 of Table 4.2 are re-estimated including our measures of Hispanic and Asian business ownership and residential proximity, all measures of racial and ethnic minority group proximity remain non-significant.

### 4.5.3 Beyond Inter-Group Dyads: Whites' Anti-Black Attitudes in a Multi- Racial and Ethnic Context

Given the number of Asian respondents included in the analyses in Table 4.2, the non-significant results for Asians are not surprising. However, the null results for the relationship between whites' anti-black attitudes and the share of businesses owned by African Americans are unexpected given the size of the white sample and previous studies documenting statistically significant relationships between whites' proximity to out-groups and attitudes (Oliver and Wong, 2003). Our results for whites in Table 4.2 suggest that the relationship between whites' anti-black attitudes and out-group contact may be more complicated than previously considered.

As discussed earlier, whites' perceptions of African Americans may be contingent on their experiences with and views of other racial and ethnic minority groups (H3). In order to assess this possibility, we re-estimate the equations in Table 4.2 columns 5 and 6, including our measures of Hispanic and Asian business ownership as well as controls for residential proximity to these non-black groups. The results are displayed in Table 4.3.<sup>27</sup>

The estimates in Table 4.3 indicate that black, Asian and Hispanic business ownership impact whites' attitudes towards blacks. Consistent with H1 and H3A, white resentment of blacks increases as African American, Asian, and Hispanic business ownership rises. On affirmative action, whites' attitudes are only significantly related to business ownership by Asians and Hispanics. Whites become more opposed to affirmative action programs as minority reference groups become more economically empowered. However, the sign on the coefficient for percent black owned businesses does suggest that white hostility towards black policy interests is greater in areas with more black economic empowerment.

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<sup>27</sup>Our results are largely consistent when we model whites' anti-black attitudes using ordered probit regression and controls for partisan identification, political ideology, the socioeconomic status of black, Hispanic and Asian residents (i.e., county-level proportion of African American, Hispanic and Asian residents that is high school educated), geographic region, county-level percent urban, and county-level population density.



Table 4.3: Predicting White Opposition to Affirmative Action and Black Resentment in a Multi- Racial and Ethnic Context

	Whites	
	Affirmative Action	Black Resentment
(Intercept)	5.96*** (0.94)	6.21*** (1.29)
Prop. Asian Businesses	3.71*** (0.40)	4.96*** (0.55)
Prop. Asian Residents	-5.60*** (0.49)	-8.10*** (0.68)
Prop. Hispanic Businesses	0.52*** (0.17)	0.76*** (0.23)
Prop. Hispanic Residents	-0.56*** (0.13)	-0.88*** (0.17)
Prop. Black Businesses	0.34 (0.27)	1.03*** (0.37)
Prop. Black Residents	-0.43** (0.18)	-0.87*** (0.25)
Prop. HS Educated	-0.79*** (0.17)	-1.37*** (0.23)
Prop. Below Poverty	-0.82*** (0.23)	-1.14*** (0.32)
Income	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)
Education	-0.11*** (0.00)	-0.19*** (0.01)
Unemployed	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Birthyear	0.00* (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Female	-0.19*** (0.01)	-0.15*** (0.02)
Homeowner	0.11*** (0.02)	0.16*** (0.02)
Length of Residence	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Num. obs.	23233	20141

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

The relative strength of the relationships between whites' anti-black attitudes and African American, Asian and Hispanic business ownership is displayed in Figure 4.7. It plots predicted opposition to affirmative action (top) and resentment of blacks (bottom) among whites by the share of businesses owned by African Americans (solid line), Hispanics (dotted line) and Asians (dashed line). It clearly demonstrates the salience of Asian business ownership in predicting whites attitudes towards African Americans.<sup>28</sup> While the relationships between white attitudes and black and Hispanic business ownership are comparable, the association between whites' anti-black views and Asian business ownership is much stronger. A 20 percentage point increase in black or Hispanic owned businesses increases white opposition to affirmative action programs by about 0.1 point (or 5%) and heightens white resentment of blacks by about 0.2 (or 7%) points. In contrast, the same increase in the proportion Asian businesses increases white opposition to affirmative action by roughly 0.7 points (or 38%) and augments white resentment of blacks by about 1 point (or 41%).

These results suggest that contact with Asian business owners has a more potent impact on whites' anti-black sentiments than exchanges with economically empowered blacks. This is partially expected; consistent with H3A, whites' attitudes towards blacks are indeed influenced by rates of business ownership by non-black minority groups. However, it is striking that Asians are particularly relevant as a reference group for whites' perceptions of African Americans. Moreover, it is surprising that the effect of Asian business ownership actually exceeds that of black business ownership. Whites' perceptions of how well Asians have fared economically appear to be fundamental in determining their attitudes towards African Americans. We suspect that these results reflect what is popularly termed the "model minority effect."

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<sup>28</sup>Predictions are derived from linear regression estimates reported in Table 4.3, holding all other independent variables constant at their median values. Roughly 4%, 2.3% and 0.3% of all unique counties in the data have rates of black, Hispanic and Asian business ownership, respectively, that equal or exceed 20%.

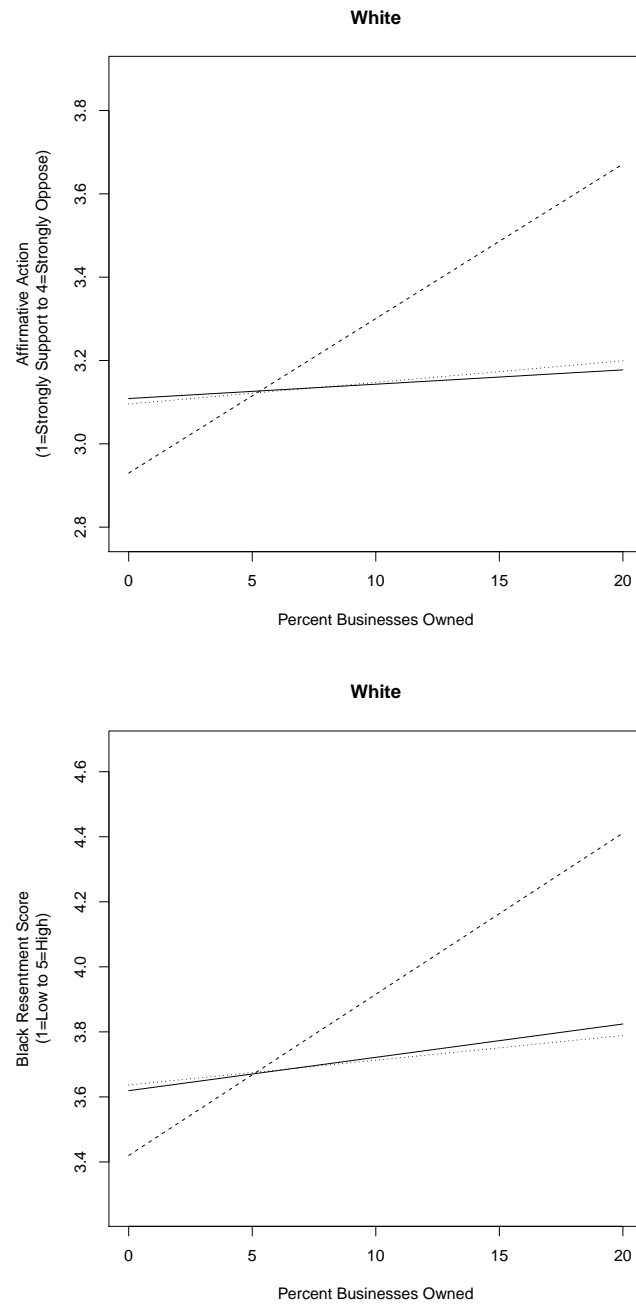


Figure 4.7: Predicted Opposition to Affirmative Action and Black Resentment among Whites by Rates of Black (Solid), Hispanic (Dotted), and Asian (Dashed) Business Ownership

#### 4.5.4 The Rival Effects of Economic Exchanges and Residential Encounters

Our results indicate that African Americans and Latinos respond to out-group economic empowerment in ways consistent with H2, adopting more positive out-group attitudes as the share of Hispanic and black owned businesses rises, respectively. In contrast, whites behave in conformity with H1 and H3A, becoming more antagonistic towards immigrants and African Americans as the proportion of businesses owned by racial and ethnic minority out-groups increases. While there is some indication that Asians react similarly to whites, the results for Asians fail to pass standard tests of statistical significance.

These results clearly demonstrate the potent influence of inter-group economic exchanges on attitudes towards racial and ethnic out-groups. Among blacks, Latinos and whites, a 20 percentage point increase in the probability of encounters with businesses owned by out-groups shifts out-group attitudes by between 5% to 40%. These findings, however, do not directly inform on the relative impact of economic versus residential encounters. In this section, we therefore compare the salience and direction of relationships between out-group attitudes and out-group business ownership as well as residential proximity. We focus on the results for blacks' attitudes on immigration (Table 4.1, column 1), whites' anti-immigrant and anti-black views (Table 4.1, column 2 and Table 4.3, column 1), and Latinos' anti-black attitudes (Table 4.2, columns 1 and 2).<sup>29</sup> Overall, we find that the effects of out-group economic empowerment and residential contact rival each other but are in opposite directions.

The results in column 1 of Table 4.1 show the distinctive impacts of out-group business ownership and residential proximity on blacks' immigration policy attitudes. While African Americans residing in counties with larger percentages of Hispanic owned businesses are less anti-immigrant, those living in areas with larger shares of Hispanic residents are more anti-immigrant. A 20 percentage point increase in the proportion Hispanic owned businesses

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<sup>29</sup>We do not examine Asians' anti-black attitudes as the estimates are too imprecise given the small number of Asian respondents.

decreases hostility towards immigrants by about 0.1 points. But, the same increase in the size of the Hispanic population increases antagonism towards immigrants by roughly an equal amount.

Similarly, economic exchanges and residential encounters with out-groups have opposing impacts on whites' immigration and anti-black attitudes. Whites' anti-immigrant orientations are positively related to the proportion of businesses owned by Asians but negatively correlated with the share of Asian residents (Table 4.1, column 2). Moreover, while economic contact with Asian, Hispanic and black owned businesses encourages more hostility towards African Americans, residential encounters with these out-groups reduces whites' anti-black sentiments (Table 4.3). The impact of out-group business ownership on whites' out-group attitudes does, however, appear to be weaker than that for residential population share. For instance, a 20 percentage point increase in the proportion Asian owned businesses increases antipathy towards immigrants by about 0.2 points, while the same increase in the share of Asian residents decreases anti-immigrant sentiment by about 0.36 points. Overall, however, the relationship between out-group business ownership and whites' out-group attitudes remains substantial: the magnitude of the business proximity effect is consistently more than 55% of the size of the residential proximity effect.<sup>30</sup>

The results for Latinos' attitudes towards blacks again suggest that the impacts of economic and residential contact with out-groups are in opposite directions (Table 4.2, column 1). However, unlike for whites, the results for Latinos indicate that proximity to businesses owned by out-group members is more relevant than residential proximity. Specifically, a 20 percentage point increase in the proportion of businesses owned by African Americans decreases Latino opposition to affirmative action by about 0.37 points; but, the same increase in the share of black residents increases opposition to affirmative action by only about 0.27 points.

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<sup>30</sup>The one exception is for the relationship between whites' support for affirmative action and the proportion black business, which is not statistically significant.

In sum, economic exchanges and residential interactions with out-groups appear to influence out-group attitudes in opposite directions but to similar extents. While blacks and Latinos respond favorably to out-groups as out-groups own a larger share of area businesses, they respond negatively as out-groups comprise a larger share of the residential population. In contrast, whites respond negatively as out-group business ownership rises and positively as out-group population share increases. Contact with out-group businesses is less important to whites' anti-immigrant and anti-black attitudes and more important to Latino's anti-black attitudes than contact with out-group residents. Overall, however, the effects are never less than half the size of each other.

That economic and residential contact with out-groups counterbalance each other is particularly notable given how highly correlated black, Hispanic and Asian business ownership are with black, Hispanic and Asian population share, respectively. It suggests that in the course of individuals' everyday interactions, positive experiences with out-groups in one domain, such as in black-Hispanic commercial transactions, help offset negative experiences with out-groups in other contexts, such as in black-Hispanic residential interactions.

#### **4.5.5 A Note on Selection Bias**

Inherent in any observational analysis of contextual effects is the question self-selection: observing a correspondence between the racial and ethnic composition of an individual's local context and her out-group attitudes may indicate that the context influenced her ethno-racial attitudes *or* that her out-group attitudes drove her residential choices. As a result, we certainly acknowledge that self-selection may be at work in the relationships analyzed above. However, there are both empirical and theoretical reasons why we believe our findings are robust to selection bias.

From an empirical perspective, if individuals select into neighborhoods based on out-group attitudes, we should observe a negative relationship between out-group hostility and rates of out-group business ownership as well as residential proximity. However, we do not

find patterns consistent with self-selection in several of the relationships analyzed. Whites become more, not less, hostile towards out-groups as out-group business ownership rises; and, blacks and Latinos become more, not less, antagonistic towards out-groups as the share of out-group residents rises.

Of course, the associations between whites' attitudes and out-group residential proximity as well as between African Americans' and Latinos' attitudes and out-group business proximity may indicate that selection bias confounds our assessment. In each of these relationships, individuals become less antagonistic towards out-groups as out-group proximity increases. Yet, for whites, these results do not undermine our central claim – i.e., that economic exchanges with out-groups are important in defining out-group attitudes. We only find evidence consistent with self-selection in the relationships between out-group attitudes and residential exposure – not out-group business proximity. For African Americans and Latinos, although we observe a positive correspondence between out-group business ownership and out-group affinity, constraints on the residential mobility of blacks and Latinos likely limit their ability to engage in such selective behavior.

More rigorous empirical tests are necessary to fully dispel the notion that self-selection accounts for our results.<sup>31</sup> However, it is notable that even after performing such tests, previous studies continue to identify contextual effects on out-group attitudes (Oliver and Wong, 2003; Gay, 2006; Ha, 2010; Hopkins, 2010). Thus, we conclude that our results are not simply artifacts of individual self-selection.

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<sup>31</sup>Additional statistical tests and data might help further minimize concerns regarding self-selection. In particular, assessments of the conditional relationship between out-group attitudes and out-group business ownership given individuals' length of residence might help confirm that the correspondence between out-group business ownership and out-group attitudes, especially among blacks and Latinos, exists not only for new but also not long-term residents (see Gay, 2006). Moreover, gathering SBO data from additional years may allow for the evaluation of how changes in rates of out-group business ownership relate to out-group attitudes, an assessment which is arguably less prone to concerns regarding selection bias (see Hopkins, 2010). These examinations provide fruitful avenues for future research.

## 4.6 Discussion

Our results demonstrate that economic exchanges with racial and ethnic out-groups are critical in shaping out-group attitudes. Depending on the groups under consideration, contact with economically empowered out-groups can produce inter-group comity or conflict. African Americans and Latinos become more supportive of each other's policy interests as the share of businesses owned by Hispanics and African Americans increases, respectively. In contrast, whites become more anti-immigrant as Asians own a larger share of local businesses and more anti-black as African American, Hispanic and Asian business ownership increases. Moreover, whites' attitudes towards African Americans are more strongly related to their proximity to Asian businesses than black businesses. Finally, the effects of economic and residential exchanges on out-group attitudes are similar in magnitude but in opposite directions.

These results raise several important points for discussion. First, the strikingly different patterns in African Americans', Latinos' and whites' reactions to out-group business ownership bears explaining. We suspect that each group's socioeconomic position helps shape reactions to out-group business ownership. Blacks and Latinos are more likely than whites to have lower incomes, less education, and consequently, reside in areas of concentrated socioeconomic disadvantage. These neighborhoods often lack economic opportunities and resources that are crucial in determining individual life chances and well-being (e.g., employment options, type and quality of housing stock, intensity of local crime, availability and quality of public services, health outcomes). Thus, out-group economic empowerment may be internalized by blacks and Latinos as a positive signal of an out-group's contribution to their otherwise struggling communities (but see Gay, 2006). Rather than being perceived as a threat to blacks' and Latinos' precarious socioeconomic position, businesses owned by out-groups may be seen as a key source of local jobs, services, and tax revenue. In contrast, with their higher incomes and education, whites on average are more likely to reside in better



quality neighborhoods. Consequently, whites may be less concerned with the contributions local businesses make to the vitality of their communities. Instead, out-group economic empowerment may simply constitute a threat to whites' longstanding social and economic dominance. Of course, our findings are only suggestive of these patterns. Future studies exploring how socioeconomic status and neighborhood quality conditions the influence of out-group business ownership would help clarify whether and how a group's socioeconomic position dictates their response to out-group economic empowerment.

Second, we find support for our reference group hypothesis, indicating the need to reconceptualize the relationship between inter-group contact and out-group attitudes. Our results demonstrate that whites' attitudes towards blacks are determined by more than just their dyadic relationship to African Americans; their anti-black attitudes are contingent on their out-group experiences with Asians and Hispanics as well. This confirms our suggestion that individuals' interactions with a single group can broadly inform their views regarding ethno-racial hierarchies, and consequently, attitudes towards other ethno-racial out-groups. This emphasizes the need to move beyond ethno-racial binaries in considering the influence of inter-group contact on out-group attitudes. Future work exploring the complex interplay between groups would improve our understanding of the political consequences of the American racial order (Hochschild, Weaver and Burch, 2012).

Third, the prominent role of Asians in the formation of whites' out-group attitudes, both on immigration policy and views towards African Americans, indicates that patterns of inter-group contact may influence the salience of different out-groups in determining out-group attitudes. Although whites are more likely to live in areas with larger shares of Hispanic and Black than Asian residents (Figure 4.3)(also see Logan and Stults, 2011), whites are more residentially segregated from Hispanics and blacks than Asians (Logan and Stults, 2011). Given that white-Asian contact is more likely than either white-Hispanic or white-black contact, inter-group experiences with Asians may be more relevant in shaping whites'

ethno-racial attitudes.<sup>32</sup> The greater salience of Hispanics in shaping blacks' anti-immigrant attitudes is also consistent with this logic. Blacks are more residentially isolated from Asians than Hispanics (Logan and Stults, 2011). Thus, patterns of inter-group contact may help determine out-group salience.<sup>33</sup>

Fourth, although our results confirm the significance of residential exchanges in shaping out-group attitudes, they also indicate the importance of considering domains of inter-group contact beyond the residential. Indeed, our findings suggest that economic and residential exchanges capture substantively distinct forms of contact with disparate impacts on out-group attitudes. Research focused solely on residential contact may, thus, overlook important variation in the influence of inter-group exchanges on ethno-racial attitudes. Our findings strongly militate in favor of moving beyond the focus on residential effects and considering the distinctive ways in which different encounters might inform out-group attitudes.

Fifth, the disparate effects of out-group business and residential proximity requires an explanation. Given African American and Latino versus white responses to economic versus residential contact with out-groups, we again point to the role of blacks', Latinos' and whites' socioeconomic positions. For blacks and Latinos, while out-group business ownership

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<sup>32</sup>The greater salience of Asians to whites' immigration attitudes may also reflect changes in patterns of residential contact over time (see Hopkins, 2010). Since the 1990s, while white-Asian segregation has decreased, white-Hispanic segregation has increased (Logan and Stults, 2011). Consequently, influxes of Asians, as opposed to Hispanics, into white communities over the past two decades may have strengthened the relevance of Asians to whites' immigration policy attitudes.

<sup>33</sup>Our data also suggest that whites and blacks are more likely to have economic exchanges with Hispanics and blacks than Asians (Figure 4.3): the county-level proportions of Hispanic and black businesses exceed that of Asian businesses among both white and black respondents. However, as with Hispanic, black and Asian residents, Hispanic, black and Asian businesses may be clustered within counties in ways that augment (or diminish) whites' and blacks' contact with these out-groups. Thus, measures of business segregation may also help to explain the greater salience of Asians to whites' out-group attitudes and Hispanics to blacks' immigration attitudes. Unfortunately, it is not possible to assess white and black respondents' segregation from Hispanic, black and Asian businesses, as the SBO does not tabulate business density at geographic levels below counties that aggregate to comprise counties. However, given the positive correlation between the ethno-racial composition of business ownership and residents, it is very likely that business segregation patterns mirror those for residential segregation. This implies that in the context of economic exchanges, rates of white-Asian contact are greater than rates of white-Hispanic or white-black contact; and rates of black-Hispanic contact are greater than rates of black-Asian contact. Accordingly, rates of inter-group economic exchanges may also help explain the differential salience of groups to whites' and blacks' out-group attitudes.

may indicate that out-groups are vital economic backbones in their communities, residential proximity to out-groups may simply spur racial threat. Rather than being perceived as suppliers of jobs and services, out-group residents may be perceived primarily as competitors for economic resources, e.g., labor market, housing, and educational opportunities. In contrast, whites may respond negatively to out-group business ownership but positively to out-group residential proximity because their advantaged position (e.g., higher incomes, more education, higher rates of employment and home ownership) makes basic economic considerations less salient than the maintenance of economic power and control. Again, studies exploring how individual socioeconomic status and neighborhood conditions shape the relationship between out-group attitudes and out-group economic versus residential exchanges would help test these propositions.

Finally, our results have important implications for the prospects for inter-racial and ethnic coalitions. Demographic shifts in the racial and ethnic composition of communities across the country have made the formation of cross-group coalitions increasingly important. The need to find common cause with ethno-racial out-groups is not only of significant concern to minority communities, who have historically been more likely to experience rising diversity firsthand; it is also of increasing relevance to white communities as minorities begin to displace whites as the majority in the country.

Based on our analysis, blacks and Latinos are more likely to form a coalition, given their shared policy interests, in contexts where there are large shares of African American and Hispanic owned businesses *and* small shares of black and Hispanic residents. In contrast, for whites, coalitions with minority groups are more likely when out-groups own small shares of businesses *and* constitute large shares of the population. Not surprisingly, these contexts are far from abundant: black and Hispanic business ownership is higher than population share in fewer than 1% of the counties in our data set; moreover, only about 1/4 of the counties in our data have lower shares of black, Latino and Asian business ownership than residents.

Instead, given the strong positive correlation between out-group business ownership and

residential proximity as well as the opposing effects of each on out-group attitudes, more readily available are environments that augment the potential for inter-group coalitions by offsetting inter-group competition with exchanges that promote cooperation. That is, communities are more likely to increase chances for coalitions by minimizing disparities in rates of out-group business ownership and residential proximity.

Consider, for instance, the cases of Suffolk County, MA and Cook County, IL. Comparing the shares of black, Hispanic and Asian business ownership and residence in these counties (Table 4.4), it is clear that Suffolk provides better conditions for inter-group cooperation than Cook. Compared to Cook, although Suffolk has a slightly larger difference in rates of black business ownership and population share, Suffolk has smaller differences in rates of Hispanic and Asian business ownership and population share. Given our findings, these patterns have a clear implication: blacks, Latinos and whites should exhibit greater inter-group comity in Suffolk than Cook County. Indeed, this is reflected in our data (Table 4.5). Blacks' and whites' anti-immigrant policy sentiment as well as whites' opposition to affirmative action are lower in Suffolk than in Cook County. Of course, given rates of black business ownership and residence, Latinos' opposition to affirmative action is higher in Suffolk than Cook County, but only slightly so. While these results confirm the unfortunate reality that communities are likely to promote harmonious inter-group relationships by counterbalancing pressures towards hostility with those augmenting comity, they also highlight the enormous potential for inter-group coalitions in an increasingly diverse society.

Table 4.4: Rates of Out-Group Business Ownership and Residence in Suffolk County, MA and Cook County, IL

	Suffolk County		Cook County	
	Businesses	Residence	Businesses	Residence
Blacks	11.8%	20.8%	17.0%	25.9%
Latinos	8.9%	15.5%	7.5%	19.9%
Asians	8.4%	7.0%	7.1%	4.8%

Table 4.5: Average Out-Group Attitudes in Suffolk County, MA and Cook County, IL

	Suffolk County		Cook County	
	Anti-Immigrant Score	Affirmative Action	Anti-Immigrant Score	Affirmative Action
Blacks	0.32	—	0.40	—
Latinos	—	2.0	—	2.24
Whites	0.40	2.58	0.48	2.96

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